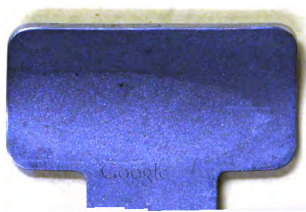

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THE
CHILDREN'S BREAD.

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A MANUAL OF DEVOTIONS
FOR
FIRST COMMUNICANTS.

FOLLOWED BY
DEVOTIONS FOR CONFIRMATION.

COMPILED BY
THE TRANSLATOR OF "HOURS AT THE ALTAR."

LONDON:
THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SON,
26, PATERNOSTER ROW; 9, CAPEL STREET, DUBLIN;
AND DERBY.

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A FEW WORDS

TO THE CHILD WHO MAKES USE OF THIS
MANUAL.

My dear Child,

This little book has been written expressly for you, in the hope that it will assist you in preparing for your First Communion. You will find, for each day of the month, an example out of the Holy Gospels, a short reflection, a resolution, and a suitable prayer. The examples are placed before the reflections, in order that your mind, being already struck with what you have just read of the Life or Words of our Saviour, may more readily understand the lessons to be drawn from them. You ought not merely to read over the resolution for each day; you must impress it deeply on your mind; be firmly resolved to practise it, and put it into execution as often as you have the opportunity. After having formed your resolution seriously and in good earnest, recite with fervour and devo-

A FEW WORDS, ETC.

tion the prayer which follows, humbly begging God's blessing on what you have just read and resolved. Each exercise closes with an ejaculatory prayer to our Lady, which you should learn by heart, and repeat very often during the day.

You will do well, on the eve of your first Communion, to read over the instructions contained in the Mass, and which are in smaller print than the rest. You will thus be disposed beforehand, and will not have to hurry over the prayers at Mass, in order to find time to read the instructions.

Should this little work be useful in leading you, my dear child, to a worthy receiving of the holy Sacraments, I shall have attained all I desire. The only reward I ask is, that you will, on the happy day of your First Communion, remember me in your prayers.

Your sincere friend and well wisher,

THE COMPILER.

DAILY EXERCISES

FOR

THE MONTH

PREVIOUS TO

FIRST COMMUNION.

FIRST DAY.

THE GREAT LOVE OUR BLESSED LORD SHOWS
TO CHILDREN IN INVITING THEM TO COME
TO HIM.

Example.

“ And they brought to Jesus young children, that He might touch them. And the disciples rebuked those that brought them. Whom, when Jesus saw, He was much displeased, and saith to them : Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God,.....And embracing them, and laying His hands on them, He blessed them.”—
(Mark x. 13, 14, 16.)

Reflection.

What child has not, on reading this history, admired the sweetness of Jesus, and envied those happy children whom He embraced and blessed? But you, my child, who are about to make your first Communion, have no cause for envy. Jesus Christ will receive you with the same love and tenderness with which He received the children in the Gospel, and not only will He embrace and bless you, but He will give Himself to be your food, and will unite His Sacred Heart to your poor heart. How careful then ought you not to be, in order to prepare yourself to receive Him worthily!

Resolution.

Endeavour to find out the fault into which you most frequently fall, whether it be disobedience, anger, or any other bad habit, and on this first day make a sincere resolution, as far as possible, to correct yourself of it during the month.

*Prayer.***To the Sacred Heart of Jesus.**

(Indulgence 100 days each time it is said. See Raccolta of Indulgences p. 132.)

See where Thy boundless love has reached, my loving Jesus! Thou, of Thy Flesh and Precious Blood, hast made ready for me a banquet whereby to give me all Thyself. Who drove Thee to this excess of love for me? Thy Heart, Thy loving Heart. O, adorable Heart of Jesus! burning furnace of Divine Love! within Thy sacred wound take Thou my soul; that in this school of charity I may learn to love that God who has given me such wondrous proofs of His great love. Amen.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

(To be frequently repeated during the day).

Holy Virgin Mary, present me to thy dear Son.

SECOND DAY.

THE NECESSITY OF PREPARING VERY CAREFULLY TO RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST.

Example.

“Jesus sent Peter and John, saying: Go and prepare for us the Pasch, that we may eat. But they said: Where wilt Thou that we prepare? And He said to them: Behold, as you go into the city, there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And you shall say to the goodman of the house: the Master saith to thee; Where is the guest-chamber, where I may eat the pasch with my disciples? And he will shew you a large dining-room, furnished; and there, prepare.”—(St. Luke, xxii. 8-12.)

Reflection.

My dear child, the room in which our Lord now wishes to celebrate the Pasch, is your heart. It is *furnished*, for, by the tender care of your pastors, you have received the necessary religious instruction.

But remember, it is not sufficient to be well instructed, for our Lord adds: "Prepare!" You must therefore prepare your heart to receive Him by great sorrow for your past sins, by a good confession, by the practice of virtue, and by prayer. Then will He joyfully come to visit you, and His sweet presence will far more than repay you for all the sacrifices you may have made in order to become worthy of Him.

Resolution.

To do every action as well as you can, by way of preparing to receive Jesus Christ.

Prayer.

O my Lord, I am not worthy to approach Thee. The heavens are not pure in Thy sight, how, then, can a heart so wretched as mine receive Thee! And yet I cannot resolve to bid Thee depart from me. One only word from Thee would suffice to cleanse me: speak, then, Lord; say to my soul: I am thy salvation. And since Thou Thyself art pleased to invite me, do Thou Thyself prepare me for the happiness of receiving Thee. Jesus! most loving Jesus, have mercy on me! (*Golden Manual.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Holy Virgin Mary, help me to prepare for my First Communion.

THIRD DAY.

PURITY OF CONSCIENCE.

Example.

“The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son..... And the marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests: and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him; Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.”— (Matth. xxii. 2, 10-14.)

Reflection.

My dear child, you also are invited to a marriage feast, to the receiving of Christ's

most sacred Body and Blood. The wedding garment you must wear is purity of heart, without which robe no one should dare to present himself at that sacred banquet. This purity of heart is to be obtained by sincere contrition for your sins, and by a good confession. Pray, then, to our Blessed Lord, and beg Him to cleanse your soul from every stain, so that you may be one of His chosen guests.

Resolution.

The child: I resolve to prepare for Communion by a sincere and exact confession of all my sins.

Prayer.

O my God, Thou knowest my great poverty and misery, and that of myself I can do nothing: Thou knowest how unworthy I am of this infinite favour, and Thou alone canst make me worthy. Since Thou art so good as to invite me thus to Thyself, add this one bounty more to all the rest, to prepare me for Thyself. Cleanse my soul from its stains; clothe it with the wedding garment of purity; adorn it with all virtues and make it a fit abode for Thee. Amen. (*Garden of the Soul.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Mary, Mother of purity, pray for me.

FOURTH DAY.

THE GREAT EVIL OF SIN.

Example.

“And going out, Jesus went according to His custom to the Mount of Olives. And His disciples also followed Him. And when He was come to the place, He said to them; Pray, lest you enter into temptation. And He was withdrawn from them a stone's cast; and kneeling down, He prayed, saying: Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from me: but yet not My will, but Thine be done. And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony, He prayed the longer. And His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground.”—(St. Luke, xxii. 39-44.)

Reflection.

This deep agony of the Heart of Jesus, which fills your own heart with sadness,

was caused, my poor child, by your sins, as well as by the sins of the whole world. Our Blessed Lord had taken all our sins upon Himself, and the sorrow He felt for them was so great, that it forced Him to sweat blood. How great must be the evil of sin, when its consequences are so dreadful! Be truly sorry for your sins, because you love your dear Saviour, and because you grieve at seeing Him suffer so much on account of them. Remember that sin is the only real evil, because sin alone can separate you from God, and prevent you from being worthy to receive Him at your first Communion.

Resolution.

Resolve to dread sin more than any other evil, and heartily detest your past faults.

Prayer.

O Heart of Jesus, suffering and agonizing on account of my sins; give me a true sense of the great evil of sin, so that I may fear nothing so much as the misfortune of ever offending Thee! Blot out my past faults in Thy most Precious Blood which Thou didst shed in the garden, and give me a true sorrow for them, that I may wor-

thily receive Thee in the Holy Communion, and may be united to Thee for ever in heaven. Amen.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Holy Mary, refuge of sinners, pray for me.

FIFTH DAY.

SORROW FOR SIN.

Example.

“And one of the Pharisees desired Jesus to eat with him. And He went into the house of the Pharisee, and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman that was in the city, a sinner, when she knew that He sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment; and standing behind at His feet, she began to wash His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. And the Pharisee, who had invited Him, seeing it, spoke within himself, saying: This man, if he were a prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner.

And Jesus answering said to him :....Dost thou see this woman ? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet ; but she with tears hath washed my feet, and with her hairs hath wiped them. Thou gavest me no kiss ; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint ; but she, with ointment, hath anointed my feet. Wherefore I say to thee : Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less. And he said to her, Thy sins are forgiven thee....thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace." (Luke vii. 36-40, 44-48, 50.)

Reflection.

You know, my dear child, that without Contrition you cannot obtain the pardon of your sins. So you must be sincerely sorry for all the offences you have committed against Almighty God, because of His great goodness to you, and because of the sufferings of your dear Saviour. Look at Magdalen, whose repentance you find in the example you have just read, and imitate her grief. She repented of all her sins, and was therefore pardoned by our Blessed

Lord. You indeed cannot wash our Lord's feet with your tears, but you can love Him with all your heart, and grieve over your faults because you love Him; and then He will say to you, as He said of Magdalen: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much."

Resolution.

The child: I will sincerely detest all my sins, for the love of Jesus Christ my Saviour.

Prayer.

My most loving Jesus, my heart leaps for joy to think upon Thy loving Sacred Heart, all tenderness and sweetness for sinful man; and with trust unbounded, it never doubts Thy ready welcome. Ah, me! my sins! how many and how great! With Peter and with Magdalene, in tears, I bewail and abhor them, because they are an offence to Thee, my sole and chief Good. Grant me, O grant me pardon for them all. O might I die, or ever I offend Thee more; this too, I ask Thy Sacred Heart,—to live to love Thee.*

* See Raccolta of Indulgences, p. 144.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Sweet heart of Mary, be my salvation !

(Indulgence 300 days. Racc. p. 180.)

SIXTH DAY.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

Example.

“ A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father: ‘ Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me;’ and he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger son, gathering all together, went abroad into a far country, and there wasted his substance, living riotously. And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And returning to himself, he said: ‘ How many hired servants in my father’s house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger? I will arise, and

will go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.' " (Luke xv. 11-19.)

Reflection.

In order to obtain purity of conscience, you must, my dear child, enter into yourself, and seriously examine your past life, that you may be truly sorry for your sins, and may make a good confession. The prodigal son, "returning to himself," reflected on his past disorders, and having brought them before his eyes, he was immediately filled with sorrow for them, and with the desire of confessing them to his father. A careful examination of your conscience will produce the same effects in you, it will show you the enormity of your sins, and the blackness of your ingratitude to your heavenly Father, and will make you long for confession, as the only means of restoring you to His favour.

Resolution.

The child: I will carefully examine my conscience before going to confession.

Prayer.

O my divine Jesus, who enlightenest all hearts by Thy secret inspirations, shed into my heart a ray of Thy light, and help me to seek out my sins, and to know their malice. May I see them now as clearly as I shall see them when Thou shalt judge me at the moment of my death. Let not self-love nor any other passion cast a veil before my eyes, but show me to myself just as I really am in Thy sight. Grant that I may be truly sorry for my sins, and may merit Thy pardon. Amen.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Jesus! Mary!

(Indulgence 25 days each time.—Racc. p. 32.)

SEVENTH DAY.

CONFESSION OF SINS.

Example.

“ ‘I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.’ And rising up he came to his father. And when he was

yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck, and kissed him. And the son said to him : ' Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son.' And the father said to his servants : ' Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet : and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry : because this my son was dead, and is come to life again : was lost, and is found.' " (Luke xv. 18-24.)

Reflection.

The touching parable of the prodigal son, gives you, my dear child, a beautiful example of the humility with which you ought to confess your sins. The prodigal dares not ask to be restored to his former dignity as a son, but, humbling himself at his father's feet, he says : " Make me as one of thy hired servants." Follow this example in your confession. Prostrate at the feet of our Lord in the person of His Priest, acknowledge yourself unworthy of being restored to His favour ; and, if you be humble indeed, then our dear Lord,

pressing you to His Sacred Heart, will joyfully call you to the banquet of His love, saying: "This my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found."

Resolution.

The child: I will make my confession with great humility and confusion at the sight of my sins.

Prayer.

O dear Jesus! my Father and my only Friend: behold me, Thy prodigal child, I have left Thee, and have abused Thy grace and Thy love, but now I desire to return to Thee. Grant me true humility of heart, that I may worthily confess my sins, and may receive absolution for them. Admit me to Thy holy table, after Thou shalt have restored me to Thy favour, which I have lost by offending Thee, and grant me, by the Holy Communion I hope to receive, the grace rather to die than ever again to be separated from Thee by mortal sin. Amen.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Holy Mary, model of humility, pray for me!

EIGHTH DAY.

WHAT SATISFACTION A CHILD CAN MAKE TO
ALMIGHTY GOD.

Example.

“ And entering in, Jesus walked through Jericho. And behold, there was a man named Zacheus, who was the chief of the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus, who He was, and he could not for the crowd, because he was low of stature. And running before he climbed up into a sycamore tree, that he might see Him; for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus was come to the place, looking up, He saw him, and said to him: ‘ Zacheus, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house.’ And he made haste and came down; and received Him with joy. And when all saw it, they murmured, saying, that He was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner. But Zacheus standing, said to the Lord: ‘ Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him four-fold.’ Jesus said to him. ‘ This day is salvation come to

this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' ”
(Luke xix. 1-10.)

Reflection.

Zacheus, having received from Jesus Christ the grace of conversion, immediately resolved to make satisfaction for his sins, by distributing alms to the poor, and by restoring what he had unjustly acquired. You must also, my dear child, make satisfaction to Almighty God; for, young as you are, and little as you can do, He is willing to accept what you are able to offer Him. Your principal means of satisfaction is the penance imposed by your confessor. Be careful to perform it with great attention and exactitude, offering it to God in expiation of your sins. You may also practise some little mortification, and, if you can, give some alms to those who are poorer than yourself. If, in order to do so, you deprive yourself of any of your usual pleasures, your sacrifice will be all the more agreeable to our Blessed Lord.

Resolution.

The child: I will perform my penance with great attention and fervour.

Prayer.

O just and holy God, I have not wherewith to make satisfaction for my sins, but I offer Thee the infinite merits of Jesus Christ. Behold, O Lord, the Sacred Heart of Thy dear Son; if I have not a sufficient sorrow for my sins, look upon the grief of that adorable Heart. That deep wound, that Most Precious Blood pleads for me; they show how abundantly my Saviour has made satisfaction for me. I accept, in token of Thy good will, whatever penance may be enjoined me, and I beg Thy grace that I may perform it well, uniting it to the pains and sorrows of my dear Lord. Amen.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Holy Mary, Queen of sorrows, help me to make satisfaction for my sins!

NINTH DAY.

**THE FIRM RESOLUTION OF NEVER MORE
OFFENDING GOD.**

Example.

“He who was healed knew not who it

was that had healed him ; for Jesus went aside from the multitude standing in the place. Afterwards Jesus findeth him in the temple, and saith to him : ‘ Behold, thou art made whole ; sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee.’ ” (John v. 13, 14.)

Reflection.

Jesus Christ makes to you, my dear child, the same exhortation He formerly made to the sick man He had cured : “ Go, and sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee.” Unless you make a firm resolution of never more offending Almighty God, you cannot hope to obtain the pardon of your sins. The priest may say the words of absolution, but He who sees your heart will not forgive you, if you secretly entertain the thought of falling back into your past faults. Oh ! think of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, which He endured for you, and resolve rather to die than ever to offend Him again.

Resolution.

The child : I firmly resolve never again to commit a mortal sin.

Prayer.

Lord, what can I do for my sins, but humbly confess them, and lament them, and incessantly implore Thy mercy for them? Hear me, I beseech Thee, in Thy mercy, where I stand before Thee, O my God. All my sins displease me exceedingly; I will never commit them any more; I am sorry for them, and will be sorry for them as long as I live; I am willing to do penance for them, and to make satisfaction to the utmost of my power. Forgive, O my God, forgive me my sins, for Thy Holy Name's sake. Save my soul, which Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood. Amen. (*Imitation of Jesus Christ.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Holy Mother Mary, obtain for me the grace never more to offend Thy dear Son.

TENTH DAY.

THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE.

Example.

“Bring forth therefore, worthy fruits of penance. And think not to say within

yourselves, We have Abraham for our father. For I tell you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." (Matth. iii. 8-10.)

Reflection.

"Bring forth fruit worthy of penance." Such, my dear child, are the solemn words by St. John Baptist to those who came to him to be baptised. The same words may also be addressed to you, now that you are firmly resolved never more to offend God; for the best way to avoid falling back into your past sins is, to practise the contrary virtues. If you have until now been disobedient, angry, impatient, greedy in eating and drinking, idle at your work or lessons, you must become obedient, meek, patient, temperate, and industrious. Reflect too on the words "Every tree that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire;" and fear lest after the grace of your First Communion, you, if you bring not forth fruits of virtue, be cast into hell fire.

Resolution.

The child : I will try all I can to practise that virtue which is hardest to me.

Prayer.

Thou knowest, O God, how weak and unable I am to do good. Leave me not to myself, but take me under Thy protection, and give me grace faithfully to comply with these holy resolutions. Enlighten my understanding with a lively faith, raise up my will to a firm hope, and inflame it with an ardent charity. Strengthen my weakness, and cure the corruption of my heart ; grant that, overcoming my enemies, both visible and invisible, I may make good use of Thy grace ;—and vouchsafe to add to these blessings the inestimable gift of final perseverance. (*Golden Manual.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Mother most amiable, pray for me

ELEVENTH DAY.

FERVOUR.

Example.

“These things, saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, who is the Beginning of the Creation of God: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold, nor hot. I would thou wert cold, or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold, nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth....Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise. Be zealous, therefore, and do penance. Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne; as I also have overcome, and am set down with My Father in His throne.” (Apoc. iii. 14-16, 19-21.)

Reflection.

The lukewarmness or tepidity which our Lord condemns with such force in the words we have just read, is to be overcome

by the practice of fervour. Fervour is that ardour and activity in the service of God, which makes every pain and difficulty seem light, and enables us never to shrink from any sacrifice, however painful it may be. A fervent child does not think it sufficient to avoid mortal sin, he has also a great horror of venial sin, and would not willingly commit the slightest fault, or do anything displeasing to Almighty God. Think of the dreadful threat our Lord pronounces against lukewarmness, and profit by His exhortation: "Be zealous," that is, fervent, "and repent." Encourage yourself by the sweet thought that He will soon come to sup with you, on the day of your First Communion, and that if you are zealous and fervent in His service, He will hereafter call you to share His throne in heaven.

Resolution.

The child: I resolve never deliberately to commit even a venial sin.

Prayer.

By Thy power, O Almighty God, shew to this earth the wonderful example of a soul so ungrateful as mine becoming fervently devoted to Thee; grant this, my

Jesus, through Thy merits. This I desire, and this I resolve to do all my life; do Thou, who hast inspired the desire, give me strength to fulfil it.—(St. Alphonsus Liguori.)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Mary, my hope, help me.

TWELFTH DAY.

PURITY OF INTENTION.

Example.

“In the mean time the disciples prayed Him, saying: Rabbi, eat. But He said to them: I have meat to eat, which you know not. The disciples, therefore, said one to another: Hath any man brought Him to eat? Jesus saith to them: My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, that I may perfect His work.”—(John iv. 31-34.)

Reflection.

You see, my child, by this example, that our Blessed Lord's sole object, during all His human life, was to do the will of His heavenly Father. Such ought also to be

yours. Endeavour, therefore, before each of your actions, to lift up your heart to God, and offer to Him the prayer, work, or recreation, you are about to begin, uniting your intention with that of your dear Saviour, and desiring to do His holy will in all things. By this means, you will sanctify all your actions, so that the very least of them will be full of merit, and will increase your reward in heaven.

Resolution.

The child: I will indeed try to offer every thing I do to Almighty God.

Prayer.

Give me, O Heart of Jesus, that purity of heart and intention, which is so pleasing to Thee; purify and sanctify me, that I may act only through Thy grace, and in order to please Thee. Sacred Heart of my Redeemer, enable me to walk henceforth steadily in the straight and narrow path which leads to Thee; help me to do every act for the love of Thee, that I may become worthy of Thy promises, and then be Thou Thyself, O Lord, my sole reward. Amen.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Mary, my mother, pray to Jesus for me.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

DOCILITY.

Example.

“ And the child Jesus grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom ; and the grace of God was in Him. And His parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the pasch. And when He was twelve years old, they going up to Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem ; and His parents knew it not. And thinking that He was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass, that after three days, they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His an-

swers. And seeing Him, they wondered. And His Mother said to Him: Son, why hast Thou done so to us? behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them: How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business? And they understood not the word that He spoke unto them. And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And His mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men."—(Luke ii. 40-52.)

Reflection.

Our Lord Jesus Christ seems to include all the qualities necessary for children, in the single virtue of docility. All we know of His life as a child after the age of twelve years, is, that He was subject to His parents. Try to imitate our Blessed Lord in this respect, my dear child, as you are now preparing to receive Him in Holy Communion. Disobedience is a very common sin with children, and you, my child, must ever remember that your parents and other superiors, are set over you by God. Be docile, then, to all those who are over you;

obey quickly and cheerfully, and without murmuring.

Resolution.

The child: Then I will try to obey quickly and with cheerfulness.

Prayer.

Thou alone, O my God, canst give me this docility which is so necessary for me. Make me, O Lord, one of those children to whom Thou hast promised the kingdom of heaven. Grant that I may obey as a child, with humility, simplicity, and joy: may I see nothing in those who govern and direct me, but Thy divine authority; may I discover nothing in what they advise or command, but Thy holy will, and obey them from the bottom of my heart, for the love of Thee. Amen. (*Dr. Challoner.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

PATIENCE.

Example.

“Behold Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the ancients of the people. And he that betrayed Him, gave them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He, hold Him fast. And forthwith coming to Jesus, he said: Hail Rabbi. And he kissed Him. And Jesus said to him; Friend, whereto art thou come?” (Matth. xxvi. 47-50.)

Reflection.

Contemplate the admirable patience of Jesus on this occasion. Judas, whom He had always treated with the greatest love and kindness, betrays Him with a kiss, and our Lord, instead of reproaching him with his vile ingratitude, addresses to him these tender words: “Friend, whereto art thou come?” Imitate this example, my dear child, and when anything happens to vex or displease you, be careful never to make

a hasty or impatient answer, but reply with sweetness and modesty, taking especial care not to nourish the least feeling of resentment or anger against those who may have contradicted or injured you.

Resolution.

The child: When anything vexes me, I will try not to speak till I have said a Hail Mary.

Prayer.

My Jesus, I marvel at Thy most patient Heart, and I thank Thee for all those wondrous examples of unwearied patience Thou didst leave me to guide me on my way. It grieves me that these examples still have to reproach me all in vain with my extravagant delicacy, shrinking from the slightest pain. O pour then into my poor languid heart, dear Jesu, an eager and enduring love of suffering and the cross, of mortification and of penance; that, following Thee to Calvary, I may with Thee attain to glory, and the joys of Paradise. Amen. (*Chaplet of the Sacred Heart.*)*

Ejaculatory Prayer.

O Mary, see the danger in which I am, and have pity on me.

* *Raccolta*, p. 145.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

SIMPLICITY AND TRUTH.

Example.

“At that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Who thinkest Thou is the greater in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus calling unto Him a little child, set him in the midst of them. And said: Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matth. xviii. 1-3).

Reflection.

Why does our Lord offer this little child for our imitation? It is on account of His love for the simplicity and candour of childhood. Cultivate in yourself, my dear child, a spirit of truth and uprightness, for scripture says, elsewhere: “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.” O my child, will you ever consent thus to profane that tongue upon which you hope so soon to receive our dear Lord’s most sacred Body? If, until now, you have unhappily told untruths, resolve never again to fall into

that fault, so unworthy of a Christian child. Then will our Lord love you, for: "They that deal truly are His delight."

Resolution.

The child: I will never again tell an untruth, whatever it may cost me.

Prayer.

O Lord! deliver my soul from wicked lips, and from a deceitful tongue. Give me a sincere love of truth, and never let either the fear of punishment, or the wish to hide my faults, induce me to tell a falsehood. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, never more to fall into this sin, which would make me abominable in Thy sight. Help me to keep to this good resolution, and do Thou set a guard over my lips, that I may not offend Thee with my tongue.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Holy Mary, refuge of sinners, keep me from a lying tongue.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

THE MORTIFICATION OF OUR OWN WILL IN
LITTLE THINGS.*Example.*

“And he that had received the five talents coming, brought other five talents, saying: Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents, behold I have gained other five over and above. His lord said to him: Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that had received the two talents came and said: Lord, thou deliveredst two talents to me; behold, I have gained other two. His lord said to him: Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” (Matth. xxv. 20-23.)

Reflection.

Almighty God does not call upon you, my dear child, to do great or extraordi-

nary things for His glory; your tender years prevent you from aspiring to such an honour. But you must not therefore be discouraged, or think that you cannot please Him. Our dear Lord recompenses even the least efforts we make to serve Him truly. You can do a great deal by mortifying yourself in those little things which happen daily. Your parents sometimes command what is disagreeable to you, your lessons often seem tedious, your meals little to your taste; even at play, your companions often choose games which do not amuse you. If, in such little occasions, you cheerfully submit, and do what is asked of you, you will have great merit in the sight of God, and He will take care to reward you.

Resolution.

The child: I will cheerfully make whatever sacrifice God may ask of me to-day.

Prayer.

Lord, Thou hearest the prayers of all; hear now that of a soul which desires to love Thee truly and with all its strength: I will obey Thee in everything that Thou wilt, without self-interest, without con-

solutions, without reward; I will serve Thee through love, only to please Thee, only to content that Heart which so tenderly loves me. My reward shall be to love Thee. O beloved Son of the Eternal Father, take my liberty, my will, all that is mine, my entire self, and give me Thyself: I love Thee, I seek Thee, I long for Thee, I ask for Thee, I implore Thee. Amen. (St. Alph. Liguori.)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Mary, have pity on me!

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

Example.

“And Jesus cometh to His disciples, and findeth them asleep, and He saith to Peter: What! could you not watch one hour with me? Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak.” (Matth. xxvi. 40, 41.)

Reflection.

Our Blessed Lord, in exhorting His dis-

ciples to pray, that they enter not into temptation, addresses that recommendation not only to them, but also to you, my dear child. You cannot hope to advance in the virtues you have resolved to practise, except through the grace of God, and that grace can only be obtained by prayer. Turn, therefore, to Almighty God, and beg Him to teach you how to pray, and to make you regular in fulfilling this great and necessary duty; for you are unable to do the least good without His divine assistance, which He grants only to those who implore Him with humility and love.

Resolution.

The child: I will be very exact in saying my morning and night prayers.

Prayer.

Most sweet Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech Thee, let Thy Passion be to me strength to guard me, protect me, and defend me; Thy wounds my meat and drink, to feed me, inebriate, and delight me; the sprinkling of Thy blood on me, the washing away of all my sins; Thy death, my everlasting glory. In these be my food, my rejoicing, my health, the

sweetness of my heart; who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen. (*Raccolta*, p. 115.)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

ATTENTION IN PRAYER.

Example.

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore Him. God is a spirit, and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 23, 24.)

Reflection.

If you wish, my dear child, to render your prayer agreeable to God, and to obtain what you ask for, you must pray with attention, that is, you must think steadily upon what you desire, and desire to obtain it, keeping yourself in the presence of God. Our Lord says that we must adore the

Father in spirit and in truth ; that is, with all our hearts. And in another place, He reproves the Jews, because they honoured Him with their lips, whilst their hearts were far from Him. These examples teach us that it is not sufficient to read or repeat forms of prayer, if we do not pay attention to them.

Resolution.

The child: I will recollect myself before prayer, in order to pray with attention.

Prayer.

Jesus, grant me grace to fix my mind on Thee ; especially in the time of prayer, when I aspire to converse directly with Thee. Control the wanderings of my mind and the affections of my heart, repress the power of my spiritual enemies, who endeavour at that time to draw my mind from heavenly thoughts, to many vain imaginations. So shall I, with joy and gratitude, look upon Thee as my deliverer from all the evils I have escaped, and as my benefactor for all the good I have received or hope for. O beloved of my soul, absorb all my thoughts here, that I may become wor-

thy to behold Thee for evermore face to face
in Thy glory. Amen. (*Jesus Psalter.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Mary, my refuge, help me !

NINETEENTH DAY.

CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER.

Example.

“ And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the Mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to Him; They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is it to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come. His mother saith to the waiters, Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye.”
(John ii. 1, 5.)

Reflection.

See, my dear child, what an admirable example our Blessed Lady gives us of confidence in prayer. At first, our Lord seems to refuse her petition, yet she does not lose

her trust in Him, but, certain of being heard, she says to the waiters: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye." You must also, when you pray, believe that our Lord will certainly hear you, for He has promised that whatever we ask in His Name, *believing*, that is, having confidence in His bounty, we shall receive.

Resolution.

The child: I will, after our dear Lady's example, place entire confidence in God.

Prayer.

God of infinite holiness and goodness, teach me how to pray in a manner worthy of Thee; enlighten my mind that I may meditate on Thy unspeakable greatness; touch and penetrate my heart, that it may feel how infinitely worthy Thou art of all love; say to my soul all that I ought to say to Thee, for "*Thou hast the words of eternal life.*" Then shall I be able to pray so as to honour Thee, and the incense of my prayer will rise before the throne of Thy mercy, to obtain Thy graces. O most holy God, I earnestly beseech Thee to teach me how to pray, for Thou alone canst instruct me in this sublime knowledge, which is the

science of the Saints. (*Visits to the Blessed Sacrament*, p. 129.)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

O Mary, blessed is he who knows thee,
and trusts in thee!

TWENTIETH DAY.

HUMILITY IN PRAYER

Example.

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican. I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven; but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say to you, this man went down into his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.”
(Luke xviii. 10-14.)

Reflection.

Another condition necessary in order to pray well, is humility. Compare the conduct of the publican with that of the proud Pharisee. The latter presents himself before God full of his own virtues, while the publican, standing afar off, dares not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but strikes his breast with compunction, and implores the Divine mercy. Follow this example. Let the thought of your sins make you humble yourself in the sight of God, and teach you to trust, not in your own merits, but in those of Jesus Christ, your Saviour, that, like the publican, you may find mercy and pardon.

Resolution.

The child: before I begin to pray, I will enter into myself, and humble myself at the sight of my sins.

Prayer.

“Spare me, O most gracious Lord Jesus Christ, whom I, an unworthy sinner, am not worthy to name, because I have so often offended Thee, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Behold,

O God, I humbly bow my knees before Thee, I blush and am confounded, and am ashamed to lift up my face unto Thee. But Thou, O most merciful Jesus, be merciful unto me a sinner. Rebuke me not in Thine anger, and cast me not away from Thy face, O good Jesus, who hast said that Thou wilt not the death of a sinner, but rather that He should be converted and live. Amen." (*Golden Manual.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Jesus, mercy ! Mary, help.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY,

PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER.

Example.

"And Jesus went from thence, and retired into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold a woman of Canaan who came out of those coasts, crying out, said to Him: Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil. Who answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying: Send her away, for she crieth after us: and He answering, said: I was not

sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel. But she came and adored Him, saying: Lord, help me. Who answering, said: It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to cast it to the dogs. But she said: Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters. Then Jesus answering, said to her: O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt: and her daughter was cured from that hour." (Matth. xv. 21-28.)

Reflection.

However careful you may be to pray well, it will sometimes appear to you, my dear child, that Almighty God refuses to listen to your request, and that He does not keep His promise of granting His children's prayers. But you must not, on that account, cease to ask for the grace you desire; the example of the woman of Canaan shows you that our Blessed Lord often yields to our demands after seeming to reject them at first. Persevere, then, and cease not to knock at the gate of Divine Mercy, for, as we read in the Imitation of Christ: "God often giveth in one short moment what He hath a long time denied."

Resolution.

The child: I will not cease to ask for the grace of God, and pray for perseverance.

Prayer.

Do not refuse, O Sacred Heart of Jesus, do not refuse the sweet and consolatory favour I ardently ask of Thee; I will not leave Thee, O Divine Heart, until Thou hast said: "I am thy salvation;" until Thou hast said; "Thy prayer is heard." Ah! canst Thou forsake me, Thou who hearest and grantest prayer? I am not worthy even to pick up the crumbs that fall from Thy table, and yet Thou deignest to call me to Thy sacred banquet. Give me the necessary dispositions for receiving Thee worthily, those dispositions of faith, humility, and confidence, which made the woman of Canaan find favour in Thy sight.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

My Beloved Mother, it is for Thee to rescue me!

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

You now enter, my dear child, upon the nine days immediately preceding your first communion. Endeavour to prepare with a daily increasing fervour. You will find at page 74, prayers for each day of a Novena, which you should begin to-day.

THE CHILD'S LIVELY FAITH IN THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

Example.

And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke; and gave to His disciples, and said; Take ye, and eat. This is my Body. And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my Blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins." (Matth. xxvi. 26-28.)

Reflection.

What are you going to receive on the day of your First Communion, and why does your poor heart beat with joy at the

thought of that happy morning? Ah! you are glad because you will then possess your dear Lord: His Body, His Soul, His Divinity, His most Sacred Heart, and His most Precious Blood! And you are sure that it is so, because you have our Lord's own word for it; "This is My Body;—this is My Blood." Happy child! Do not neglect to thank Almighty God for the gift of faith, one which He has not vouchsafed to so many poor children who would perhaps have made a better use of it than you.

Resolution.

The child: I will make frequent acts of Faith in the Blessed Eucharist.

Prayer.

An Act of Faith in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar.

I thank thee, O holy Faith, for teaching and assuring me that in the Divine Sacrament of the Altar, in this heavenly Bread, there is, in truth, no bread, but my Lord Jesus Christ, wholly and entirely, and dwelling there for love of me. My Lord

and my All, I believe that Thou art present in the most holy Sacrament, and though I see Thee not by the eyes of the body, yet by the light of faith, I behold Thee in the consecrated species as the Monarch of heaven and earth, the Saviour of the world. Reign, O Lord, reign wholly in my soul; I give it entirely to Thee, do Thou possess it for ever; let my will, my senses, and all my powers be subject to Thy love, and let me be entirely devoted to Thy good pleasure and Thy glory. Amen. (*St. Alph. Liguori.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

O Mary, obtain for me a lively Faith in the Blessed Sacrament.

The Novena, page 74.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

THE CHILD'S CERTAIN HOPE OF ETERNAL
LIFE BY THIS UNION WITH JESUS CHRIST.

Example.

“Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you. He that

eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my Flesh is meat indeed: and my Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth this bread, shall live for ever."—(John vi. 54-59.)

Reflection.

Our Blessed Lord assures us that if we eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, we shall have eternal life. This promise is addressed to you, my dear child, with particular force at this time, when you are preparing for First Communion. And does it not fill your soul with the sweetest consolation to think, that not only will Jesus Christ come into your heart for a few minutes, too short, alas! for your loving desire, but that He will dwell within you by His grace, during this life, and will raise you up to eternal bliss at the last day? Oh! let this hope sink deep into your heart, and

let it animate you with fresh love for our dear Lord !

Resolution.

The child : I will animate myself to fervour by the hope of possessing Jesus Christ now and for ever.

Prayer.

An Act of Hope in Jesus Christ through the Most Holy Sacrament.

O blessed Jesus, life eternal, by whom I live, and without whom I die, unite me to Thyself ; that in the embraces of Thy holy love and divine will, I may rest for ever. When shall I behold Thee, sweet Lord ? when shall I appear before Thy Face ? When shall I see Thee in the land of the living ? Till then I sigh and bewail my banishment, desiring to be dissolved, and be with Thee. O Jesus, who, by becoming my food in this life, preparest me to feed on Thee eternally in the next ; who in this divine banquet givest us possession of Thy grace here, and a sure pledge of glory hereafter ; have mercy on me, O Lord, and hear my prayer. As I now adore Thee here by faith, under these sacred veils, so I hope one day to behold Thee face to face, and

eternally rejoice in Thy presence. Amen.
(*Golden Manual*, p. 334.)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Most holy Mary, obtain for me great confidence in Jesus Christ.

The Novena, p. 75.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

THE CHILD'S BURNING LOVE FOR OUR LORD.

Example.

"Now it came to pass as they went, that Jesus entered into a certain town; and a certain woman, named Martha, received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who, sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard His word." *And the Lord said:* "Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her."—(Luke x. 38, 39, 42.)

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. (John xiii. 23.)

Reflection.

The passages you have just read give you, my dear child, two very touching ex-

amples of the love of the saints to our Blessed Lord. St. Mary Magdalen, sitting at the feet of Jesus, and St. John, the beloved disciple, leaning on His breast, were entirely occupied with the thought of their Master, and were unspeakably happy in their calm and tranquil love. And you, my child, whom will you love, if you love not Jesus? On whose heart will you repose, if not on the Heart of Jesus? Oh! love Him well, who loves you so much, and when His Heart rests in yours, at the sweet moment of your First Communion, ask for no other happiness but that of enjoying Him here, and of being united to Him for ever, a blessed eternity.

Resolution.

The child: I will love Thee, my dear Lord Jesus Christ, with all my heart!

Prayer.

An Act of Love to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

O my dear Lord Jesus Christ, Thou who so lovest men, how can it be that among mankind there are so few that love Thee? I, at least, will no longer be, as I have hitherto been, among the sad number of the

ungrateful; I am resolved to love Thee as much as I can, and to love none but Thee: Thou deservest it; Thou dost so earnestly command it: I will, then, try to please Thee only: grant, O God of my soul, that I may truly love Thee. Give the goods of this world to those who desire them; I desire and seek nothing but the priceless treasure of Thy love. I love Thee, my Jesus, I love Thee, infinite Goodness, Thou art all my wealth, all my pleasure, and all that I love. (*St. Alph. Liguori.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

O Mary, obtain for me a great love for Jesus Christ!

The Novena. p 76.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

THE CHILD'S ARDENT DESIRE OF COMMUNION.

Example.

“And when the hour was come, Jesus sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer.”—(Luke xxii. 14-15.)

Reflection.

How full of sweetness and love are these words of our Blessed Lord, and with what joy ought you not to listen to them, for they are addressed to you, my dear child ! Yes, your Blessed Saviour deigns to long for the time when you will receive Him. And do you not also most ardently desire that happy moment ? Do you not count the days, and the minutes, that still remain to be spent before you can possess your Lord ? Does not your heart burn within you, at the mere thought of your approaching happiness ? O happy, happy child ! it is well for you if such be your case, for as your desire is, so also will be your joy.

Resolution.

The child : I will ask Jesus Christ to give me an ardent desire to receive Him.

Prayer.

An Act of Desire to receive our Lord.

Behold, I come to Thee, O Lord, that it may be well with me by Thy gift, and that I may be delighted in Thy holy banquet, which Thou, O God, in Thy sweetness,

hast prepared for the poor. Behold in Thee is all whatsoever I can or ought to desire ; Thou art my salvation and my redemption, my hope and my strength, my honour and my glory. Make, therefore, the soul of Thy servant joyful, because, O Lord Jesus, I have lifted up my soul to Thee. I desire to receive Thee devoutly and reverently ; I would gladly bring Thee into my house, that, like Zacheus, I might receive Thy blessing. My soul longs to be nourished with Thy Body ; my heart desires to be united with Thee. Come, then, Lord Jesus, come quickly ! (*Imit. Jesus Christ.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Most holy Mary, help me to desire nothing but Jesus !

The Novena, p. 77.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

THE CHILD'S PROFOUND HUMILITY AND
SENSE OF ITS OWN UNWORTHINESS TO
RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST.

Example.

“ And when He had entered into Capharnaum, there came to Him a centurion,

beseeching Him: and saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus saith to him; I will come and heal him. And the centurion making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." (Matt. viii. 5-8).

Reflection.

Endeavour, my dear child, to enter into the humble sentiments of the centurion. No, you are not worthy to receive Jesus Christ, and were it not for His great goodness, you could not hope for the grace of Holy Communion. But He deigns to invite you, and even to command you to approach His holy Table. Obey, therefore, but obey with a deep sense of your own unworthiness. There is no disposition more pleasing to our dear Lord than that of humility. Humble yourself, therefore, at His feet, knowing that you are but a sinful child, and that He is the Lord of glory, and say to Him with the centurion, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof."

Resolution.

The child: I will ask of Almighty God the grace to know and feel my own unworthiness.

*Prayer.**An Act of Humility.*

O my Lord, I am not worthy of approaching Thee. The heavens are not pure in Thy sight, how, then, can a heart so wretched as mine receive Thee? And yet I cannot resolve to bid Thee depart from me. One only word from Thee would suffice to cleanse me: speak, then, Lord; say to my soul: I am Thy salvation. And since Thou art pleased to invite Thyself to it, do Thou Thyself prepare it for the happiness of receiving Thee. Jesus, most loving Jesus, have mercy on me! (*Golden Manual*, p. 352.)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

O Mary, be thou my strength and my refuge!

The Novena, p. 78.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

THE CHILD'S FIRM CONFIDENCE IN
JESUS CHRIST.*Example.*

“And it came to pass, when He was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy, who seeing Jesus, and falling on his face, besought Him, saying: Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And stretching forth His hand, He touched him, saying: I will. Be thou cleansed. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.” (Luke v. 12, 13.)

Reflection.

The humble sentiment of your own unworthiness, though a necessary disposition for Communion, must not, my dear child, exclude a tender and unbounded confidence in our dear Lord. Say with the leper in the Gospel: “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean;” feeling certain, at the same time, that Jesus Christ has no greater desire than that of seeing you receive Him worthily. Throw yourself therefore into His arms, press yourself to His

Sacred Heart, and say the words which the Church puts into your mouth: "Say only one word, and my soul shall be healed."

Resolution.

The child: In Thee, O Lord, will I put all my trust.

Prayer.

My beloved Lord, since Thou callest me with such infinite goodness to approach Thee, though Thou seest me so worthless, and so ungrateful to Thy love, I will not let my unworthiness discourage me; I will come and place myself before Thee; do Thou change me entirely; drive from me all love that is not of Thee, every desire that does not please Thee, every thought which does not tend to Thee. My Jesus, my Beloved, my Treasure, my All, I will satisfy Thee only, and please Thee alone; Thou alone deservest my love, and Thee only will I love with my whole heart. My most sweet Jesus, never permit me to be separated from Thee! Amen. (*St. Alph. Liguori.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Mary! Mary! Thy name is my defence!

The Novena, p. 79.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

In three days, my dear child, your happiness will be complete; you will receive your Lord! Let that thought encourage you to renew your fervour in preparing for so blessed a Guest. Should it be the custom in your parish to make a retreat of three days previous to First Communion, follow all the exercises with scrupulous attention. Should such not be the practice, or should the necessity of your work or any other cause hinder you from joining your companions, endeavour at least to retire into the secret chamber of your heart to avoid dissipation, and ask your confessor to appoint you some pious work which may help you to keep yourself united to our Blessed Lord.

THE CHILD'S DEEP GRATITUDE FOR THIS
SACRED MYSTERY OF LOVE.

Example.

“And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid for

behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me ; and holy is His name. And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him. He hath showed might in His arm : He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things ; and the rich He hath sent empty away." (Luke i. 46-53.)

Reflection.

Reflect deeply, my dear child, on these beautiful words of our dear Lady. She breaks forth into a hymn of thanksgiving, because the Infant Jesus is incarnate in her womb, and you who are so soon to partake of Mary's happiness by receiving Him into your heart, ought you not also to sing a song of gratitude and joy? You can never sufficiently magnify the Lord, who deigns to fill you with good things, even with His most sacred Body and Blood. Endeavour to become worthy of so great a favour, by practising humility, for only the humble shall be exalted ; and conceive a great hun-

ger and an ardent desire for this most precious food, for those only who are hungry shall be filled.

Resolution.

The child: I will imitate our Blessed Lady in her gratitude to God.

Prayer.

AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING.

O my dear Jesus, how much too good, how much too loving art Thou to those who seek Thee with love: *the Lord is good to them that hope in Him*; how good art Thou to those who try to conform their wills to Thy divine Will! *How good is God to Israel, to them that are of a right heart!* My God, my Beloved, my Hope, my All, I desire Thee, and I desire Thee only, that so I may love Thee, and please Thee, and always do Thy Will. Enable me to find Thee, enable me to please Thee, and never let me leave Thee more. Amen.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Mary, my Mother, make me grateful to thy dear Son.

The Novena, p. 80.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

THE CHILD'S FREE OBLATION OF ITSELF INTO
THE HANDS OF OUR BLESSED LORD.

Example.

“ And the Angel answering, said to her : The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee ; and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. And Mary said : Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it done unto me according to thy word.” (Luke i. 35-38.)

Reflection.

Remark with what admirable resignation our dear Lady gives herself up into the hands of Almighty God : “ Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it done unto me according to thy word ! ” Follow her sweet example, and say to our Blessed Lord, who asks you to give yourself wholly to Him : “ My dear and loving Saviour, behold me, Thy poor child : do with me what pleases Thee.” Make this offering of yourself in the sincerity of your heart, that you may be His already before He gives Himself to you in Holy Communion.

Resolution.

The child: I give myself entirely into the hands of Almighty God.

Prayer.

AN ACT OF OBLATION TO JESUS CHRIST IN
THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

O divine Word, my Jesus! I see Thee wholly sacrificed, annihilated, and as it were, destroyed for my sake on the altar; it is but right, then, that as Thou dost sacrifice Thyself, having become a Victim of love for me, I should devote myself entirely to Thee. Yes, my God, my sovereign Lord, I this day sacrifice to Thee my whole soul, my entire self, all my will, and all my life. O Eternal Father, I unite this my poor sacrifice to the infinite sacrifice which Jesus, Thy Son and my Saviour, made of Himself to Thee, once, on the Cross, and which He now offers so many times every day on our altars. Accept it through the merits of Jesus, and give me grace to renew it every day of my life, and at the moment of my death. Amen. (*S. Alph. Liguori.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Mary, show thyself a Mother.

The Novena, p. 81.

THIRTIETH DAY.

THE CHILD'S DEVOTION AND SELF-
ABASEMENT.*Example.*

"And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; and she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord." (Luke i. 41-45.)

Reflection.

You are now, my dear child, on the eve of your First Communion, of that happiest day of your whole life, upon which you will possess your dear Saviour. Is it not true that your heart beats with joyful expectation, and that your tongue cannot express what you feel? And is not Elizabeth's exclamation the only one you can utter:

“Whence is this to me, that my Lord should come to me?” To me, a poor sinful child; to me, so unworthy of receiving Him; to me, the unhappy cause of His sufferings and His death? Ah! be of good courage; the Heart of Jesus will soon beat within your heart; then will you be filled with a joy you have never yet felt. Remember at that moment the words of St. Elizabeth, and say to Him, whose delight is in the heart of the humble: “Whence is this to me, that Thou, O most mighty Saviour, shouldest thus come to me?”

Resolution.

The child: All this day I will think of my great unworthiness to receive Jesus Christ.

Prayer.

O Jesus, Brightness of eternal glory, Comfort of the soul in its pilgrimage; my tongue cannot express the sentiments of my heart; but my silence itself speaks to Thee. How long doth my Lord delay to come. Let Him come to me, His poor servant, and make me joyful; let Him stretch forth His hand, and deliver me, a guilty wretch, from all anguish. Come! for without Thee I can

never have one joyful day or hour, for Thou art my joy; come! for without Thee my table is empty. Let others seek, instead of Thee, whatever else they please; nothing else doth please me, or shall please me, but Thou, my God, my Hope, my eternal Salvation. (*Imit. Christ.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Mary, help me to love thy Son!

The Novena, p. 82.

A NOVENA

IN PREPARATION FOR FIRST COMMUNION.

FIRST DAY.

AN ACT OF FAITH IN THE BLESSED
SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR.

I believe, O my Jesus, Thy divine word, that under this appearance of bread Thou Thyself art here present, as Thou art in heaven. I believe that Thou art the Divine Son, eternally equal to the Father, that by the operation of the Holy Ghost Thou didst take human flesh of the Blessed Virgin. I believe that Thou art the same Jesus who

wast born of Mary, ever Virgin, adored an Infant by Thy angels, by the shepherds, and the Magi. I believe, O my Redeemer here present in this Sacrament, that Thou art the same Jesus of Nazareth, who didst heal the sick and didst raise the dead, who for us didst suffer and die upon the Cross. I believe, finally, that Thou Thyself, now sitting glorious at the right hand of Thy Father in heaven, and there interceding for me, yet art verily present in this Sacrament, as my nourishment on earth; and I hope through the virtue of this divine food, to obtain eternal life. Amen. (*Chaplet of the Blessed Sacrament.*)

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me.

SECOND DAY.

AN ACT OF HOPE IN JESUS CHRIST PRESENT
IN THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

In Thee, O Lord Jesus, do I place all my hope, because Thou alone art my Salvation, my Strength, my Refuge, and the Foundation of all my happiness. Encou-

raged by Thy goodness, I come to Thee as a poor and infirm sheep to its shepherd ; as a sick man to his physician ; as a guilty child to its most loving and indulgent father. Though my sins are innumerable, and very grievous, yet they are but light when compared with Thy boundless mercy, and the infinite ransom of Thy Blood. Have pity, therefore, on me, O Jesus, and save me, for Thou forsakest none that put their trust in Thee. (*Altered from the Vade Mecum*, p. 168.)

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me !

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me !



THIRD DAY.

AN ACT OF CHARITY.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, living and life-giving fountain of eternal life, infinite treasure of the divinity, glowing furnace of love ! Thou art my refuge and my sanctuary. O my adorable and lovely Saviour ! consume my heart with that burning fire wherewith Thine is ever inflamed ; pour down on my soul those graces which flow from Thy

love, and let my heart be so united with Thine, that our wills may be one, mine being in all things conformed to Thine. May Thy will be the rule alike of my desires and of my actions. Amen. (*St. Gertrude.*)

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me!

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me!

FOURTH DAY.

AN ACT OF CONTRITION.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I detest with all sincerity of soul, and with the most profound and bitter grief, everything which hath ever offended Thee in myself or others; I detest it for the love which Thou deservest, and which is supremely due to Thee. Oh, that I could efface with my tears, and wash away with all my blood, the injuries which I have done to Thee! Oh that I could repay Thee, by my repentance, by my works, and by my love, all the glory, honour and satisfaction of which Thou hast been robbed, by the injuries and outrages that have been committed against

Thee! Accept at least this earnest desire to do so with which Thou inspirest me.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me!

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me!

FIFTH DAY.

AN ACT OF REPARATION.

I adore Thee, most Sacred Heart of Jesus, in this august Sacrament of the Altar, wherein Thou art so little loved or responded to by the hearts of Thy creatures, especially by bad Christians, who offend Thee by so many acts of disrespect, and who unworthily receive Thee in Holy Communion: in atonement for these great profanations, and for the want of reverence even of those who are consecrated to Thee, and who should most earnestly attend to Thy worship, I dedicate to Thee, and offer Thee my contrite heart, beseeching Thee to make it ever burn with the love of Thee. Amen. (*Adorations of the Blessed Sacrament.*)

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me!

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me!

SIXTH DAY.

AN ACT OF HUMILITY.

Prostrate in Thy presence, O Jesus, I acknowledge that I am not worthy to approach to Thee, miserable sinner as I am ! I am but dust and corruption ! My sins render me unworthy to be fed with the bread of angels, to receive Thee, my Creator and my God. And although I hope that they are now forgiven, nevertheless I acknowledge myself unworthy to be at Thy table, in the quality of Thy child. I confess that I am not worthy to be admitted as one of Thy hired servants. May the ardour of my devotion, however, O Lord, supply my unworthiness. Purify me still more from my sins, I detest them with my whole heart, I never more will offend Thee. Amen. (*Spiritual Repository*, p. 261).

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me !

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me !

SEVENTH DAY.

AN ACT OF HUMBLE CONFIDENCE IN OUR LORD.

Lord, trusting in Thy great goodness, and in Thy great mercy, I come as one who is sick, to my Saviour; hungry and thirsty I come to the Fountain of Life; needy I come to the King of heaven, a servant to his Lord, a creature to his Creator, one who is in desolation to his Friend and Comforter. But whence is this to me, that Thou shouldest come to me? Who am I, that Thou shouldest give Thyself to me? How dare such a sinner appear before Thee? How is it that Thou Thyself dost vouchsafe to come to me? It is of Thy own mercy Thou dost this, not for my merits, that Thy goodness may be better known to me, that greater charity may be imparted, and humility more perfectly recommended. Since, therefore, this is what pleaseth Thee, and Thou hast commanded that it should be so, Thy merciful condescension pleaseth me also, and I wish and pray that my iniquity may be no obstacle to the worthy receiving of Thee. Amen. (*Imit. Jesus Christ.*)

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me!

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me!

EIGHTH DAY.

AN ACT OF GRATITUDE.

O most sweet and most bountiful Jesus, how great reverence and thanks, with perpetual praise, are due to Thee, for the receiving of Thy Sacred Body, whose dignity no man can sufficiently express ! But whereon what shall I think in this Communion, when I am approaching to my Lord, whom I can never reverence as much as I ought, and yet would gladly receive with devotion ? What can I think upon better or more wholesome to my soul, than the humbling of myself entirely in Thy presence, and extolling Thy infinite goodness over me ? I praise Thee, O my God, and I extol Thee for ever : I despise myself, and subject myself to Thee, feeling to the full, my own unworthiness, and beseeching Thee to have mercy upon me. (*Imit. Jesus Christ.*)

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me !

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me !

NINTH DAY.

A PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE DISPOSITIONS
NECESSARY FOR MAKING A GOOD COMMU-
NION.

O Lord my God, my Creator and my Redeemer, I desire to receive Thee in this my First Communion with such affection, reverence, praise, and honour; with such gratitude, worthiness, and love; with such faith, hope, and purity, as Thy most holy Mother, the glorious Virgin Mary, received and desired Thee, when she humbly and devoutly answered the angel, who declared to her the mystery of the Incarnation: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to Thy word." And as Thy blessed forerunner, the most excellent among the saints, John the Baptist, in Thy presence leaped for joy, through the Holy Ghost, whilst he was yet shut up in his mother's womb, and afterwards seeing Jesus walking amongst men, humbling himself exceedingly,—said, with devout affection; "The friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy, because of the bridegroom's

voice ;" so I also wish to be inflamed with great and holy desires, and to present myself to Thee with my whole heart. Receive my wishes, O Lord my God, and my desires of giving Thee infinite praise, and endless thanksgiving, which, according to the multitude of Thy unspeakable greatness, is most justly due to Thee. And let all who reverently and devoutly celebrate Thy most high Sacrament, and receive it with full faith, find grace and mercy at Thy hands, and humbly pray for me a sinful creature ; and when they shall have obtained their desired devotion and joyful union, and shall depart from Thy sacred heavenly table, well comforted and wonderfully fed, let them vouchsafe to remember my poor soul. Amen. (*Imit. Jesus Christ.*)

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me !

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me !

The Exercise for Confession, page 126.

On going to Confession, my dear child, be very careful to accuse yourself of all the sins that you remember, and ask of God a great sorrow for them, bearing in mind that purity of heart is a disposition absolutely necessary for making a good Communion.

Listen with docility to the advice of your director ; and when he gives you absolution, renew your act of Contrition, and receive with humility and thankfulness, the pardon of your sins.

EXERCISE

FOR THE DAY OF FIRST COMMUNION.

You are now arrived, my dear child, at that happy and much longed-for day ;—the day of your First Communion. Was not the thought of Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, the first that presented itself to your mind on awaking this morning? Be careful to keep it before you till the joyful moment when you shall receive your God. Avoid all dissipation, and, as far as possible all conversation, keeping yourself in as strict retirement as circumstances will permit. Say your morning prayers with the greatest devotion. In going to Church, let your behaviour indicate the great and solemn event which is about to take place. Do not look at anything you may happen to meet, lest your attention should be diverted from Him who alone ought to

occupy your thoughts. On reaching the Church, which you ought to do some minutes before Mass, reverently kneel down, and implore the aid of the Holy Ghost, the Blessed Virgin Mary, your holy Angel Guardian, and all the Saints, saying the following prayers :

PRAYERS BEFORE MASS.

Invocation of the Holy Ghost.

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of Thy love.

Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created, and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

O God, who hast taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of Thy Holy Spirit; grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His consolation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer to our Blessed Lady and the Saints.

O all ye blessed angels and saints of God who see Him face to face, whom I here

receive under these humble veils ; and thou most especially, ever Blessed Virgin, Mother of this same God and Saviour, I most humbly beg the assistance of your prayers and intercession, that I may in such manner receive Him here on earth, as to be brought one day to enjoy Him with you in heaven, there to praise Him and love Him for ever. Amen. (*Garden of the Soul.*)

MASS,

IN PREPARATION FOR FIRST COMMUNION.*

When the Priest begins Mass.

O my beloved Jesus, behold me at the foot of this Altar, on which Thou art about to descend, in order to give Thyself to me. I unite myself to Thy minister, and offer This sacrifice for Thy honour and glory, in order to obtain the pardon of my sins, to thank Thee for all Thy favours, and to beg for new blessings, which I hope for from Thy bounty. Give me grace to receive Thee worthily in this my First Com-

* This Mass is, in a great measure, imitated from that in the *Formulaire des Prières*, published by Lefort, Little.

munion. Alas ! why cannot I say with holy confidence : " Come, Lord Jesus, my heart is ready." O my Saviour, yesterday, at the tribunal of penance, Thou didst wash out my faults with Thy precious Blood, and clothe me anew with the robe of innocence. And yet I dare not say my heart is ready, now that with tenderest love Thou art coming to meet me. Have pity upon me, O Jesus, all my hope is in Thy Sacred Heart. Holy Virgin Mary, my Angel Guardian, pray for me.

Kyrie Eleison.

Heavenly Father, have mercy on me.

Jesus, my Saviour, have mercy on me.

Holy Ghost, my light and my guide,
have mercy on me.

Gloria in Excelsis.

" Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will," Glory, love, eternal praise to God ! Hearken, O Thou who out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast perfected praise ; listen to Thy children who now praise Thee with the united song of their lips and their heart. We adore Thee, we bless Thee, we give

Thee thanks for Thy great glory. Alas ! our homage is nothing, and yet it is all Thy poor children have to offer Thee, even on this day of Thy greatest love. Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us ; hear our prayers. For Thou, O Jesus, art alone Holy, Thou alone art the Lord, Thou alone art the Most High, with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

At the Collect.

My holy Mother, the Church, prays for me, O God ! my relations and friends also offer their supplications, which my good Angel carries to the foot of Thy throne. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered for me. In heaven, my holy patrons pray for me ; above all, Mary, my sweet and tender Mother, does not, on this happy day, forget her child. O my God, receive these prayers, purify my soul, give me a new heart, a heart like that of Mary, that I may worthily receive my divine Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the Unity of the Holy Ghost, One God, world without end. Amen.

At the Epistle.

Pay great attention to the words of Scripture. See how good our Lord is in inviting little ones to come to Him.

Wisdom hath built herself a house, she hath hewn her out seven pillars. She hath slain her victims, mingled her wine, and set forth her table. She hath sent her maids to invite to the tower and to the walls of the city: Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me. And to the unwise she said: Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you. Forsake childishness, and live; and walk by the ways of prudence."—(Prov. ix. 1-6.)

At the Gradual.

O how sweet is Thy Spirit, O Lord, who to show Thy sweetness towards Thy children, vouchsafest to feed them with Thy sweetest Bread which cometh down from heaven!

At the Gospel.

Listen to the voice of your dear Saviour; His sweetest words were ever for children. He was thinking of you when He said: "Behold the birds of the air! for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them.... Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon, in all his glory, was arrayed as one of these."

O my Father and my God! I have not sown, neither have I laboured; I have lived like the little birds of heaven, and like the flowers of the field, and yet Thou givest me a more excellent food, a warmer garment. For it is Thou, O Bread of Life, who art soon to be the food of my soul, and who wilt one day be for me a garment of glory and immortality. O my Jesus, Thou callest me to Thy Sacred banquet; Thou wishest to give Thyself entirely to me; come, then, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

At the Credo.

“God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son.” Yes, my God, I believe in this prodigy of Thy love. Yes, Thou hast given us Thy Son, and Thou givest Him even to me, a poor child. Yes, I firmly believe it, in a few instants I shall possess that Jesus who, for me, was born in a stable, who died for me upon the cross, who rose again, who has gone up into heaven, there to prepare a place for me, and who will one day come with glory to judge all my actions, to make me give an account of all the graces I have received, and particularly that of my First Communion. O my God! let not that grace,

to-day so consolatory, become, at any future time, the cause of my condemnation !

Holy Ghost, Spirit of life and love, deign to enlighten my mind, to inflame my heart. The august Sacrament I am going to receive is a bond of love ; may it unite me to all my brethren in the faith ; may I this day, by the Communion of Saints, participate in the merits of the Blessed in heaven, and of the just on earth. O Jesus ! by Thy great mercy and by the virtue of Thy most sacred Body and Blood, which I am about to receive, I hope for a glorious resurrection at the last day, and for the happiness of possessing Thee for ever in heaven. Amen.

At the Offertory.

The priest offers to God the bread and wine which are to become the Body and Blood of the Lamb of God. Offer yourself to God, in union with Him, and say,

My God, I place upon this paten and in this chalice all that I am, all that I have : I offer Thee all the gifts of nature and of grace which, of Thy goodness, Thou hast bestowed upon me. I offer Thee also all the moments of my life, that each one may be employed for Thy glory, and the salvation of my soul. I am all Thine, my God,

and soon Thou wilt be all mine. O my Jesus, Thou hast promised that a cup of cold water given in Thy name shall not lose its reward. I confidently hope therefore, in return for my heart, which I here offer Thee, a greater reward than all the bliss of heaven, even Thyself, my beloved Saviour, who art the joy of Paradise, the glory of the angels and the saints.

At the Lavabo.

“I will wash my hands among the just, and will compass Thy altar, O Lord.” O my Saviour, these words are sweet and consolatory for the innocent and faithful, but I cannot place myself among those happy souls. I must humbly remain among those whose only hope is in Thy pure mercy, and in Thy most Precious Blood. I have sinned, pardon me, O my Saviour! Remember that they who are sick, alone stand in need of a physician, and that Thou didst not come to call the just, but sinners to penance.

At the Preface.

“Sursum Corda.”—Lift thyself up, O my heart! lift thyself up to heaven; it is there, in the midst of the angels and saints,

that I ought to be found, I who am about to make my First Communion. But will not my heart itself be a heaven upon earth, when the God of heaven shall have taken up His abode in it? What a paradise for Thee, O my God! Ah! why cannot I at least love Thee as the blessed do in that happy dwelling? Alas! where shall I find fervour enough to praise Thee aright? Holy Angels, let me unite my weak voice to your eternal praises, and sing with you: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

At the Canon.

Teach me to pray, O my God, put into my mouth words pleasing to Thee, O Thou who deignest to receive the children's prayer. O my Jesus, I again place on this altar, on which Thy Precious Blood will soon flow, all the desires I have formed since I first began to prepare for this happy day. Give me, Lord, a pure heart, and the grace ever to be faithful to Thee. Pour forth Thy choicest blessings on the Pope, the clergy, and the whole Church; on my

parents, my brothers and sisters, my companions, my benefactors, all those who have taught me to know Thee and love Thee, and in particular on N.

Recollect yourself at this moment, my dear child : think only of God ; put yourself in His presence, as if there were no one in the world but Himself and you. Lift up your eyes, fix them upon your dear Saviour, who tenderly looks down upon you from heaven. He calls you ; He stretches out His arms to you ; He opens His Heart to receive you. But you cannot go to Him ; no matter ! He Himself will come to you ; from the throne of His glory He will descend upon this altar, thence to come into your heart.

My beloved Saviour, from what a distance dost Thou come ! From heaven to the altar ; from the altar to my heart ! Ah ! I have now but one desire, I can now say but one word : " Come, Jesus, come, come quickly."

Wait for the precious moment of the elevation, desiring the coming of your Lord. When the priest elevates the Body and Blood of Jesus, adore your Saviour, and beg Him, by His divine Blood, to purify you more and more, and to prepare you to receive Him.

After the Elevation.

" The charity of Jesus Christ constraineth us." My Jesus is here ; I hear His sweet voice. " Come," He says, " come, My kingdom is for children, My table also is for them. Come, for I long to press thee to My Heart ; come, for I desire with an

ardent desire to eat this Pasch with thee. Come, for I love thee and seek thy love." O Jesus, how good Thou art! Here I am; I come with confidence; with a great desire of being all Thine, as Thou wilt be all mine.

At the Pater.

Recite slowly the Lord's Prayer. It is the best of all prayers, and was taught us by Jesus Christ Himself. Pause at the petition: "Thy kingdom come," begging our Lord to reign for ever in your heart. When you say: "Give us this day our daily bread," think of the heavenly Bread you are going to receive; and in saying: "Deliver us from evil," desire to become more and more pure, in order to please the heavenly Spouse of pure souls.

At the Agnus Dei.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; give us peace, meekness, purity; grant that we also may become Thy lambs, following Thee and imitating Thy virtues. Open to me Thy Heart; I desire Thee, my Saviour! I sigh after Thee; come, come!

Employ the time remaining before Communion by making acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, humility, and desire; in order to which you may, if you choose, say the following prayers.

AN ACT OF FAITH AND HOPE.

My beloved Jesus, I firmly believe that

I am going to receive Thy Body, Thy Blood, Thy Soul, and Thy Divinity; I believe it because Thou hast told me so, and I hope of Thy infinite goodness for the gifts and graces Thou givest to those who receive Thee with a lively faith and an entire confidence.

ACT OF ADORATION AND HUMILITY.

O my beloved Jesus, I adore Thee in the Sacred Host with all the respect of which I am capable. I humbly confess that I am not worthy to receive Thee; but say only one word, and my soul shall be healed.

AN ACT OF LOVE AND DESIRE.

O my beloved Jesus, who hast loved me so as to die for me and to feed me with Thy adorable flesh, I love Thee with all my heart and above all things; come and take possession of this heart which ardently desires to be united to Thine.

Come forward, happy child, the Tabernacle is opened, the Pyx is uncovered, the priest holds in his hand the Sacred Host, he shows it to you, saying: "Behold the Lamb of God!" Renew in your heart acts of faith, love, humility, desire, and advance with angelic modesty to the holy Table. Kneel down reverently; take the cloth, and hold it so as to form a small table, to receive the Host, in case the priest should let it fall. When it is your turn to communicate, lift up your head, which you must then keep quite still; open your mouth well, and place your

tongue upon your under lip. Open, at the same time, your heart to Jesus, receive Him with profound respect, and, above all, with ardent love. Swallow the Sacred Host as soon as possible, without dividing it with the teeth, or letting it melt in the mouth. Should it attach itself to the roof of the mouth, you must not use your finger, but, without being troubled, detach it gently with the tongue.

After holy Communion, return modestly to your place, and remain for some moments in silence, and, as it were, lost in the presence of that God whose love has made Him come into your heart; then repeat a few aspirations; but, above all, love, oh! love Jesus who loves you so much; speak to Him with confidence, give yourself to Him without reserve; say from time to time:

“My beloved is to me, and I to Him!—My God and my all!—O Jesus, I will ever love Thee!—O my sweet Saviour, I adore Thy Sacred Heart!”

After you have thus spent a few minutes, say the following prayers:—

AN ACT OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING.

My beloved Jesus, I adore Thee with my whole heart; I unite myself to the adoration of the angels and saints in heaven. Unable as I am to offer Thee worthy thanks for so great a benefit, I beg them to thank Thee for me, and to bless Thee eternally.

AN ACT OF LOVE.

I love Thee, O my Jesus, and will love Thee for ever. Oh! it is good for me to be with Thee, and to possess Thee in my

heart. How sweet and amiable art Thou, O my God! I have Thee now, and will not let Thee go. Reign for ever in my heart, and be Thou the sole master of my life. I love Thee, O my Jesus, my treasure, my life, my all! I love Thee, I love Thee!

AN ACT OF OBLATION.

My God! I give myself entirely to Thee. I abandon myself to Thy love. All I ask of Thee, my Jesus, is that Thou wilt make me faithful to Thee. Oh! let me never forget this joyful day; this day on which I have the happiness to possess Thee! Never let me retract the offering I now make of my whole self to Thee.

GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

My God, I promise to love Thee, and to be faithful to Thee: and, to prove my love, I will endeavour in all things to become like Thee. In order to please Thee, and to be united to Thy divine Heart, I will become meek and humble like Thee. I will pray like Thee, I will work like Thee, I will suffer like Thee, so that my life may lead others to think of Thee, and inspire them with the desire of serving Thee. Oh!

can I ever do enough for Thee, who art my Food on earth, and my sole Reward in heaven?

A Petition.

My dearest Jesus, Thou who knowest my weakness and the wants of my soul, give me grace to correct myself of my faults, and to advance in virtue. Succour Thy holy Church in all her trials. Bless my parents, my superiors, my friends, and my enemies, and grant that we may all see Thee in heaven. Grant the same blessing to those who have instructed me, and prepared me for the happiness of receiving Thee for the first time. Deliver the holy souls in purgatory, particularly the souls of N. and N., and those souls for which I am most bound to pray.

O my Saviour, before I leave Thee, I have one more request to make. O Thou who knowest all things, if Thou foreseest, O my God, that after this first Communion I shall again offend Thee, and abuse Thy grace and Thy love, call me to Thee before I fall into so great a misfortune; rather let me die than ever again be separated from Thee. Strike me now, when, as I hope, I am in Thy grace. But no, Thou biddest

me to live. I will live then ; I will live to love Thee, to make others love Thee ; I will try to merit the grace of receiving Thee often, and the happiest days of my life shall be those on which Thou shalt deign to come into my heart.

A Prayer to our Blessed Lady, the Angel Guardian, and the Saints.

O glorious Virgin, unite with me in giving thanks to Thy beloved Son, who hath restored me to His grace, and refreshed me with the banquet of His most Precious Body, and obtain of Him that He depart not from me without leaving a large benediction behind Him for my soul. O my holy Angel Guardian, my holy patrons N. and N., and all ye angels and saints of God, obtain for me grace to fulfil the holy resolutions I have this day made.

The Conclusion.

O Heart of Jesus, I will not depart till Thou hast Blessed me. Bless me in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and let Thy blessing descend upon me, and upon all those for whom I ought to pray, and remain with us for ever. Amen.

Leave the Church reverently, and return home with great modesty and recollection, taking care not to lose, by dissipation, the precious treasure you have received. Be affectionate to your parents and friends, and receive their caresses and the congratulations they will not fail to address you, with joy and gratitude. Spend this happy day in joyful union with your dear Saviour. If you return to the services of the Church, assist at them with fervour, renew at the feet of Jesus Christ your baptismal vows, and receive with humble devotion the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, offering your heart to Jesus Christ, and begging for grace never to offend Him more. Should there be no evening service at Church, or should you be unable to go, try to find time during the afternoon to read a chapter in some good book, and to recite the following prayers.

*A Renewal of the Baptismal Vows for the
Day of First Communion.*

Almighty and Eternal God, adorable Trinity, who, out of Thy pure mercy, hast regenerated me in the waters of baptism, what thanks do I not owe Thee for so great a favour! I was born a child of wrath, but by baptism I have become Thy adopted child, and an heir of Thy kingdom. Alas! I have profaned Thy gifts, I have lost the grace of my baptism, and have deserved hell. But Thou hast not abandoned me; Thou hast supported me in my wanderings, and of Thine own free grace hast offered me the pardon of my sins. Like the Father of the prodigal son, Thou hast received me anew into Thy arms, and, by an excess of love, Thou hast this day ad-

mitted me for the first time to Thy holy Table. O my God, Thou hast forgotten my iniquities, but I will remember them, and will never cease to weep for having offended Thee.

I now desire to renew the sacred obligations of my baptism, and to make at Thy feet a sincere resolution of never more losing that innocence which Thou hast just restored to me.

Lamb of God, who hast washed me in Thy Blood, and fed me with Thy Flesh, in Thy presence I, N., freely and with all my heart, now renounce the devil, his pomps, and his works. I consecrate myself entirely and irrevocably to Thy service; I will never be ashamed of Thy gospel, nor of the name of a Catholic Christian; I will rather die a thousand deaths than ever offend Thee by a single mortal sin.

O my Lord Jesus, engrave, I beseech Thee, these holy promises on my heart, and bless the resolution I now form of being faithful to them till the last moment of my life. Amen.

An Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for the Day of First Communion.

On this happy day of my First Commu-

nion, I dedicate myself, with all my heart, and for all my life, to the love and honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to the reparation of all the injuries and outrages committed against that Divine Heart. I renew the sacred alliance which I contracted with Him in holy baptism, and renouncing Satan, his pomps, and all his works, I devote to the adorable Heart of my divine Master, and of His most Holy Mother, all that I am, and all that I have, for time and for eternity. Amen.

*An Act of Consecration to our Blessed Lady,
for the Day of First Communion.*

Queen of angels and of men, most holy Mary, on this, the happiest day of my life, on which Jesus, thy Divine Son, has deigned to admit me to His table, I come to offer thee the homage of my heart, and to claim thy powerful protection. O holy Virgin, be thou my queen, my advocate, my mother, and may I be counted among thy children. Keep me from all sin, and do not permit me again to sully that robe of innocence which thy Son Jesus washed in His Blood, and which I wore at the banquet of His love. O holy Mother, instil into my

heart thy horror of sin, thy contempt of the world and its vanities, thy love for Jesus. Bless my parents and those who have instructed me, and all those for whom I ought to pray. Sanctify them, save them, and me with them, and obtain for us all from thy dear Son, the grace to reign with Him and with thee eternally in heaven. Amen.

Say your night prayers with great devotion, and retire to rest full of gratitude to God, and with an ardent desire of serving Him faithfully for the future.

AN EXERCISE

FOR THE NINE DAYS AFTER FIRST COMMUNION.

I am sure, my dear child, that nothing would give you so much pain as the idea of losing the fruit of your First Communion; and, indeed, it would be the greatest misfortune that could happen to you. Endeavour, then, to employ those means which are most likely to secure your perseverance, the chief of which you will find in the following Novena. Perform the exercise appointed for each day with fervour and attention, and do not neglect to form the resolution of practising what is recommended to you.

FIRST DAY.

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT OF
THE ALTAR.*Example.*

Jesus said to them : " Amen, amen, I say to you : Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world. They said therefore unto Him : Lord, give us always this bread. And Jesus said to them : I am the bread of life : he that cometh to me shall not hunger : and he that believeth in me shall never thirst...All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me, I will not cast out." (John vi. 32-7.)

Reflection.

Doubtless, my dear child, now that you have received your God, now that you have been fed with the Bread of Life, and are still full of the sweet and holy emotion caused by the visit of Jesus to your heart, you feel as if you could never cease to love

Him, present as He is in the Holy Sacrament. Oh! try to keep that love ever fresh in your heart. Think of the Blessed Sacrament when you are tempted to sin, and you will never offend your loving Saviour. Endeavour, as often as you can, to assist at Mass and Benediction, and to visit the Holy Sacrament, you will there learn to love Jesus, and will obtain all you desire; for He has promised to receive you, weak and helpless as you are, saying in the words of the Gospel: "Him that cometh to me, I will not cast out."

Resolution.

The child: I will visit the Blessed Sacrament, and assist at Mass and Benediction, as often as I can.

Prayer.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me—Heart of Christ, inflame me—Body of Christ, save me—Blood of Christ, inebriate me—Water out of the side of Christ, wash me—Passion of Christ, strengthen me—O good Jesus, hear me—Within Thy wounds hide me.—Let me not be separated from Thee.—Defend me from the wicked enemy.—At

the hour of my death call me.—And bid me come unto Thee.—That with Thy saints I may praise Thee for all eternity. Amen.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Mary, Mother of Love most fair, pray for me.

SECOND DAY.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

Example.

“After they were come to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony; and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true; that you also may believe. For these things were done, that the Scripture might be fulfilled: You shall not break a bone of Him. And again another Scripture saith: They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”—(John xix., 33-7.)

Reflection.

Can you, my child, read this touching passage of Scripture without emotion? Look at your dear Saviour; He is dead upon the cross; His hands and feet are pierced with rough nails, His head is crowned with thorns. His whole body is covered with wounds;—has He not suffered enough for you? No, His love is not yet satisfied, for His Sacred Heart longs to be opened that you may find in that deep wound a sure refuge in all your troubles, in all your temptations. Why do your eyes fill with tears? Ah! it is because you cannot in any other way express what you feel at this proof of love. Be devout then to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, delight to hide yourself in that blessed wound, and try by your love and affection to make amends to our Lord for all those who outrage and offend Him, for all those who refuse to look with faith and love, “upon Him whom they have pierced.”

Resolution.

The child: I will try to console our Lord by dearly loving His most Sacred Heart.

Prayer.

O my Jesus, I adore the most holy wound of Thy sacred side ; I compassionate Thee for that bitter insult. I thank Thee for Thy love which offered Thy breast and heart to the thrust, and gave up the last drops of blood and water for my plentiful redemption. I offer to the Eternal Father that Blood, and the love of Thy most holy humanity, that my soul, having once entered into that most loving Heart, so ready and willing to receive the worst of sinners, may go out thence no more for ever. Amen. (*Vade Mecum.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Sacred Heart of Mary, make me love the Heart of Jesus.

THIRD DAY.

DEVOTION TO THE PASSION OF OUR LORD.

Example.

“ And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and

stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then He saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither Thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered, and said to Him: My Lord, and my God!" (John xx., 26-8.)

Reflection.

How admirable is our Blessed Lord's condescension and indulgence towards His unbelieving disciple, and how consoling it is for you, my dear child, to think that, at will you also can draw near to Jesus, and by devout and pious meditation, put your finger into the print of the nails; not, indeed, because you doubt of His resurrection, but because your sweetest occupation in this life is to think of the sufferings our dear Lord endured for you. Ask Him to give you a sincere devotion to His most Sacred Passion, for if you love to keep in mind His sufferings and His death, you will never cease to deplore your sins for which He suffered, and you will rather die than ever offend Him again.

Resolution.

The Child: I will frequently reflect on

the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and will be sorry for my sins.

Prayer.

Hail! true Body, born of the Virgin Mary. Thou didst truly suffer, and wast immolated on the cross for man. From Thy wounded side flowed water and blood. Be Thou my food at the hour of my death. O mild, O gracious Saviour Jesus Christ, Son of the true and living God, and of the Virgin Mary, have mercy on me.

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Most sorrowful Virgin, pray for me.

FOURTH DAY.

DEVOTION TO OUR BLESSED LADY.

Example.

“Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. When Jesus therefore had seen His mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He saith to His mother: “Woman, behold thy son.” After that, He saith to the disciple: “Behold

thy mother." And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own." (John xix., 25-7.)

Reflection.

One of the surest means of persevering in the grace of your first Communion, is a tender and filial devotion to our Blessed Lady. The saints assure us that no devout client of Mary was ever lost, and the history of the Church in all ages shows us the power of her intercession. Have confidence, then, my dear child, in Mary. She is your mother, for our Blessed Lord gave her to you when He was dying on the Cross, and her heart is too tender, and too full of love for you, to refuse your prayers. Ask her to obtain for you a great love of virtue and an extreme horror of sin. Never let a day pass without invoking her, and she will plead your cause, and obtain for you all the graces necessary for salvation.

Resolution.

The child: In all my necessities I will call on Mary for help.

Prayer.

O God, who hast placed us under the

patronage of the most holy Mother of Thy Son Jesus, and dost excite us to strive for the prize of our high calling; come into our hearts, and pour down upon us Thy purifying grace, whereby we may persevere in Thy service, and in the service of the same most holy Virgin Mary; so that strengthened by so powerful a protection, we may perform those good desires which Thou hast put into our hearts, and having accomplished all that was set before us to do, may attain those things which Thou hast been pleased to promise to those who abide in Thee. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, world without end. Amen. (*Vade Mecum.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee !

FIFTH DAY.

THE FREQUENT RECEPTION OF THE
SACRAMENTS.

Example.

“ I am the bread of life. Your fathers

did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven ; that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever ; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." (John vi., 48-52.)

Reflection.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in instituting the adorable Sacrament of His Body and Blood, did not mean us to content ourselves with receiving Him once, but He wishes us often to have recourse to this heavenly food, that our souls may live for ever. Endeavour, then, my dear child, to become worthy often to receive your dear Lord, and, to this end, go often to confession, that you may keep your heart pure, and may not contract any habit of sin. The Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist are powerful means of preserving virtue, and a child who goes regularly to confession and to communion, whenever his confessor permits it, will certainly, if he have suitable dispositions, receive the strength necessary to conquer his passions, and persevere in the love of God.

Resolution.

The child: I will never omit going to confession and communion on the days appointed by my director.

Prayer.

Grant me grace, O God, to keep this resolution with fidelity, so that I may regulate my communions according to the advice of those whom Thou hast given to be my directors; and never permit me to approach Thy holy Table without due preparation. I am indeed subject to many faults, weak, slothful, and inconstant, in Thy service; but who is so able to correct me of my weakness and to lighten my miseries, as Thou, my Jesus, who art the God of mercy and the bread of the strong? I beseech Thee, therefore, O my most amiable Saviour, to grant me the dispositions necessary for frequent and worthy communion. Come, my Jesus, come often into my heart, Thou who art the life of my soul, for I desire to live only for and by Thee. Amen. (*Dr. Challoner.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Mary, my Mother, obtain for me the grace often to receive thy dear Son.

SIXTH DAY.

SPIRITUAL READING.

Example.

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was hungry. And the tempter coming said to Him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said: It is written: Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.” (Matth. iv. 1-4.)

Reflection.

These words of our Blessed Lord teach you, my dear child, that your soul, as well as your body, stands in need of daily nourishment, if you wish to preserve its strength. That daily food of your soul you can procure by spiritual reading. Ask your confessor to recommend to you some book suited to your age and capacity, and try to find leisure to read a little every day. However short may be the time you can

give to this exercise, it will, if you are attentive, be very profitable to your soul. A few lines read with great care by those whose work occupies them nearly the whole day, will certainly produce more fruit than several pages read with inattention and carelessness, which is too often the case with those whose time is at their own disposal.

Resolution.

The child: I will try not to let a day pass without reading a little in some spiritual book.

Prayer.

O my Saviour, who hast so abundantly provided us with pious books, to serve as a bright shining light to preserve us from those wanderings which are dangerous to our souls, enlighten our minds with the truths we read, and move our hearts to practise them. Grant that they may be our consolation in trouble, our support in difficulties, and the rule of our whole conduct. Grant that, being instructed in Thy law and in Thy holy will, by the reading of good books, we may endeavour to fulfil

them in all things, and may attain to the imitation of Thy virtues. (*Dr. Challoner.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Seat of Wisdom, pray for me !

SEVENTH DAY.

EJACULATORY PRAYER.

Example.

“And when He entered into the boat, His disciples followed Him: and behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves, but He was asleep. And they came to Him, and awaked Him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them; Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up, He commanded the winds, and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey Him?” (Matth. viii. 23-27.)

Reflection.

The cry, “Lord, save us, we perish,” is but one example among many that

are found in the Gospel, all of which bear witness to the readiness with which our Lord hears ejaculatory prayer. An ejaculation is a short but ardent petition by which we call upon God for help, or express our love for Him. Nearly all those who addressed our Lord during His mortal life employed this form of prayer: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"—"Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean," and other similar prayers. The saints also, as we read in their lives, practised and recommended it. It is particularly useful for those who are obliged to work all day, and cannot say many prayers, but it is necessary for all. Continue, then, my dear child, this good habit, which you have gained during the last month; elevate frequently your heart to God, call Him to your aid, and He will not fail to assist you.

Resolution.

The child: I will frequently raise my heart to God during the day, and particularly in time of temptation.

Prayer.

O Father, O Son, O Holy Ghost! O

most Holy Trinity! O Jesus! O Mary! Ye blessed Angels, and all ye saints of Paradise, obtain for me these graces, which I ask through the merits of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. Always to do the will of God. To be always in union with God. To think only of God. To love God alone. To do everything for God. To seek only the glory of God. To make myself a saint for God's sake alone. To know my own nothingness. To know more clearly the will of God. (Never to lose the grace of my First Communion.) O Most Holy Mary, offer to the Eternal Father the most precious Blood of Jesus Christ, for my soul, for the holy souls in purgatory, for the wants of Holy Church, for the conversion of sinners, and for the whole world.

(Indulgences 300 days each time. *Raccolta*, p. 21).

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, I give you my heart and my soul.

(Indulgence 100 days.)

EIGHTH DAY.

THE AVOIDING OF BAD COMPANY.

Example.

“And when the servants of the high priest had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sitting about it, Peter was in the midst of them. Whom, when a certain servant maid had seen sitting at the light, and had earnestly beheld him, she said: This man also was with Him. But he denied Him, saying: Woman, I know Him not. And after a little while, another seeing him, said: Thou also art one of them. But Peter said: O man, I am not. And after the space, as it were, of one hour, another certain man affirmed, saying: Of a truth, this man was also with Him; for he is also a Galilean. And Peter said: Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, as he was yet speaking, the cock crew. And the Lord turning looked on Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, as He had said: Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter going out, wept bitterly.” (Luke xxii. 55-62.)

Reflection.

Let the sad example of St. Peter's denial of Christ teach you, my child, to avoid bad company; the most serious of all dangers. It is very probable that Peter would not have denied his Lord, had he not mixed with those who were persecuting Him. You also will be exposed to the danger of renouncing your holy religion, and committing mortal sin, if you keep company with those who do not respect the laws of the Church, nor the sacred precepts of the Gospel. Oh! my dear child! break off, whatever it may cost you, all friendship with those who swear, hold immodest discourses, lose mass, or neglect the Sacraments; for if you continue to frequent their society, you will certainly, and that before long, fall into the same disorders, and where would then be the fruit of your First Communion?

Resolution.

The child: I will never make an intimate friend of any one who I know thinks lightly of committing mortal sin.

Prayer.

In order to change the earth into a para-

dise, and to begin in time what is to form our occupation for eternity, Thou commandest us, O Father of mercies, to have no connection but with persons of piety, of regular morals, who are simple and humble, and only to converse on edifying subjects; Thou commandest us to hold a familiar commerce with Thee and with Thine angels: O most loving God! O most amiable God! grant us grace to perform what Thou commandest, and command what Thou pleasest. Amen. (*Dr. Chalmers.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

(Imit. Christ. ch. viii.—prayer at the end.)

Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, may I die in peace in your blessed company. (*Ind. 100 days.*)

NINTH DAY.

THE HABIT OF INDUSTRY.

Example.

“The kingdom of heaven is like to an householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

And having agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market-place idle. And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go you also into my vineyard." (Matth. xx. 1-7.)

Reflection.

One of the great sources of vice and ill-conduct in young people, is the habit of idleness. Is the question, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" applicable to you, my dear child? If so, tremble for your perseverance in virtue; tremble lest you should very soon fall back into sin, and lose that grace which you have just regained in the sacrament of penance. Are you obliged to work for your living? If so, thank God for having placed you in the same state of life as He chose for Himself while

on earth ; work constantly and cheerfully, and temptation will not be able to shake you. Are your parents rich ? If so, apply yourself seriously and attentively to your studies, and let the necessary intervals of recreation be filled up by reading, work, or play, avoiding that idleness and listlessness which is the particular danger of your state, and from which you ought to beg Almighty God to deliver you.

Resolution.

The child : I will never be idle, but will constantly employ my time well.

Prayer.

What afflicts me most, O my God, in this valley of misery and tears, is, that I cannot be perfectly free from sin ; my frailty makes me tend continually towards evil ; my natural inconstancy renders me wavering in virtue ; my sloth and lukewarmness make me seek for repose, while time is given me but in order to labour. Thou alone canst remedy these evils, O Lord ; break these fatal chains which attach me to this body of sin ; inspire me with the sincere resolution of being totally

Thine, and when Thou shalt have bestowed on me these happy dispositions, call me to Thyself, to the end I may be united to Thee for ever. Amen. (*Dr. Challoner.*)

Ejaculatory Prayer.

Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, assist me in my last agony. (*Ind. 100 days.*)

This last day of the Novena closes the exercises for First Communion. My dear child, forget not this happy day, nor the great grace you have received. Keep it ever present to your mind, and whenever you are tempted to commit sin, ask yourself this question: "What would I have thought of this temptation on the day of my First Communion?" and act throughout life as your conscience tells you you would have acted then. If you follow this advice, you will never voluntarily commit even a venial sin.

AN EXERCISE FOR CONFESSION.

You are aware, my dear child, that in order worthily to approach to the Sacrament of Penance, five conditions are necessary. You must:

1. Diligently examine your conscience;
2. Conceive a sincere sorrow for having offended God;
3. Make a firm resolution never more to offend Him;
4. Sincerely confess all your mortal sins to the priest;
5. Do the penance given you by him.

The following acts will help you to ask of God the grace to make a good confession, and will, if you recite them devoutly, draw down upon your soul the necessary dispositions.

A Prayer before the Examination of Conscience.

O my Lord Jesus Christ, judge of the living and the dead, before whom I must

one day appear to give an exact account of my whole life; enlighten me, I beseech Thee, and give me an humble and contrite heart, that I may see wherein I have offended Thine infinite Majesty, and judge myself now with such a just severity, that then Thou mayest judge me with mercy and clemency.

Examine your conscience with great care and attention; at the sight of your sins think of the injury they have done to God, and the awful sufferings our dear Lord endured for them. Reflect also that by them you have lost heaven and deserved hell, and make the following

Act of Contrition.

O my God, I detest these and all other sins which I have committed against Thy divine Majesty. I am extremely sorry that I have offended Thee, because Thou art infinitely good, and sin displeaseth Thee. I love Thee with my whole heart; and firmly purpose, by the help of Thy grace, never more to offend Thee. I resolve to avoid the occasions of sin; I will confess my sins, and will endeavour to make satisfaction for them. Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy, and pardon me, a wretched sinner. In the name of Thy beloved Son Jesus, I humbly beg of Thee so to wash me with His precious

Blood, that my sins may be entirely remitted.

Good Resolutions.

I am firmly resolved, O my God, never more to offend Thee: from this moment I will ever love Thee. Thou art henceforth the sovereign Lord of my heart, reign over it for ever. I renounce sin, because it offends Thee. I detest all the sins I have committed, and I detest them for love of Thee, because Thou art infinitely pure, infinitely holy. I form a sincere resolution never to commit them more. O my God! Thou who givest me this good resolution, bless me and strengthen me, that whatever temptations may assail me, I may never more be separated from Thee. Amen.

A Prayer before Confession.

O my God, I desire to present myself at the feet of Thy minister, in order to confess all my sins. I am but a poor child, and Thou art the Lord of heaven and earth, and yet I have dared to offend Thee. O how good art Thou, to have provided this remedy for my bad disorders. Grant me grace to accuse myself of all my sins, without false shame, human respect, or fear; knowing that I shall find in Thy priest a

kind and indulgent Father, whose only wish is to absolve me. Grant me grace to make such a confession as may merit Thy pardon, so that no stain of any sin may, after the absolution I hope to receive, remain on my soul.

When your turn comes enter the confessional, and accuse yourself of all your sins with sincere contrition and a firm purpose of amendment.

A Prayer after Confession.

My dear Jesus, how much am I indebted to Thee! Through the merits of Thy Precious Blood I hope that this day I have received Thy pardon. I give Thee infinite thanks for so great a favour. May I one day come to sing for ever in heaven the praises of Thy mercies towards me! O my God, if hitherto I have so frequently lost Thee, I will now never more lose Thee. Thou indeed deservest all my love, and I desire truly to love Thee, and to be never more separated from Thee. I have already promised Thee, and I now again promise Thee, rather to die than offend Thee any more. But, O Jesus, Thou knowest my weakness, give me grace to remain faithful to Thee to the end of my life, and to have recourse to Thee whenever I shall be

tempted. Most holy Mary, assist me ;
thou art the mother of holy perseverance.
(*S. Alph. Liguori.*)

Perform your penance as soon as you can. and with great attention, offering it to God as a satisfaction for your sins, in union with the merits of Jesus Christ.

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

It is very probable, my dear child, that, soon after your First Communion, you will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, in which the Holy Ghost will come to take possession of your soul and to enrich you with His gifts. Endeavour to prepare yourself well, that you may worthily receive so great a grace, and may derive, from this holy sacrament, all the fruit it is intended to produce in those who are well disposed. During the nine days preceding confirmation, or, if you have not time for a novena, at least on the three days preceding, say the following prayers, inviting the Holy Ghost to come into your heart.

VENI CREATOR.

Veni, Creator Spiritus,
Mentes tuorum visita,
Imple superna gratia,
Quæ tu creasti pectora.

Qui diceris Paracletus,
Altissimi donum Dei,
Fons vivus, ignis, charitas,
Et spiritalis unctio.

Come, O Creator Spirit blest !
And in our souls take up Thy
rest ;
Come, with Thy grace and hea-
venly aid,
To fill the hearts that Thou hast
made.

Great Paraclete ! To Thee we
cry,
O highest gift of God most high !
O fount of life ! O fire of love !
And sweet anointing from above.

**Tu septiformis munera,
 Digitus Paternæ dexteræ,
 Tu rite promissum Patris,
 Sermone ditans guttura.**

Thou in Thy sevenfold gifts art
 known;
 Thee, finger of God's hand we
 own;
 The promise of the Father
 Thou!
 Who dost the tongue with pow'r
 endow.

**Accende lumen sensibus,
 Infunde amorem cordibus,
 Infirma nostri corpora,
 Virtute firmans perpeti.**

Kindle our senses from above,
 And make our hearts o'erflow
 with love;
 With patience firm, and virtue
 high,
 The weakness of our flesh
 supply.

**Hostem repellas longius,
 Pacemque dones protinus;
 Ductore sic te prævio,
 Vitemus omne noxium.**

Far from us drive the foe we
 dread,
 And grant us Thy true peace
 instead;
 So shall we not, with Thee for
 guide,
 Turn from the path of life
 aside.

**Per te sciamus da Patrem,
 Noscamus atque Fillum,
 Teque utriusque Spiritum
 Credamus omni tempore.**

Oh! may Thy grace on us be
 stow,
 The Father and the Son to
 know,
 And Thee through endless times
 confess'd,
 Of both th' Eternal Spirit blest.

**Deo Patri sit gloria,
 Et Filio, qui a mortuis
 Surrexit, ac Paraclito.
 In sæculorum sæcula.**

All glory while the ages run
 Be to the Father and the Son,
 Who rose from death; the same
 to Thee,

Amen. O Holy Ghost, eternally. Amen.

*A Prayer to implore the Gifts of the
Holy Ghost.*

Almighty and eternal God, Thou hast deigned to adopt me for Thy child in the Sacrament of Baptism ; Thou hast granted me the remission of my sins at the tribunal of Penance ; Thou hast invited me to Thy holy Table, and hast fed me with the Bread of Angels ; and now Thou callest me to the grace of Confirmation. O Holy Spirit, prepare me to receive Thee, by granting me Thy sacred gifts. Grant me the spirit of *wisdom*, to teach me to despise the perishable things of this world, and to love eternal goods ; the spirit of *understanding*, to enlighten me, and give me the knowledge of religion ; the spirit of *counsel*, that I may seek the surest means of pleasing Thee and gaining heaven ; the spirit of *fortitude*, that I may courageously surmount all the obstacles to my salvation ; the spirit of *knowledge*, to instruct me in the ways of God ; the spirit of *piety*, that I may find the service of God sweet and pleasant ; the spirit of *fear*, to inspire me with a loving respect for God, and to make me dread to offend Him. Sign me, by Thy mercy, with the holy

sign of a disciple of Jesus Christ, and, grant that, carrying the cross on my forehead, I may also carry it in my heart, so that, confessing Thee openly before men, I may merit to be reckoned among Thy elect at the last day. Amen. Pater, Ave.

EXERCISE FOR MASS* ON THE DAY OF CONFIRMATION.

Hear Mass with great fervour and attention, thinking of the grace you are about to receive.

At the Beginning of Mass.

Send forth, O Lord, Thy light and Thy truth, that they may conduct me, and bring me to Thy holy mount, and into Thy holy tabernacles. Send me Thy Holy Spirit, that He may renew and fertilize the barren land of my soul. Create a clean heart in me, O God! and renew a right spirit within my bowels. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and strengthen

* This Mass is translated, with alterations, from that in the "Formulaire des Prières," published by Lefort, Lille.

me with a perfect Spirit. Hope in God, O my soul, and He will fill thee with His Holy Ghost, and thou shalt sing His praise with joy.

I confess, O Lord, all my iniquities in Thy Presence, deign to purify me more and more. Holy Virgin Mary, who didst conceive our Blessed Redeemer by the power of the Holy Ghost; blessed Apostles, who have abundantly received the unspeakable gifts of this divine Spirit; all ye saints and elect of God, who were sanctified by this same Spirit of grace and love, pray for me, that my heart may be entirely purified from all its stains, and that it may become the worthy sanctuary of that adorable Spirit, whom I am now so soon to receive. Come, Holy Comforter, Gift of God most high, Sacred Fire which enlightenest and warmest our hearts, Holy Unction, Balm of all our ills, guide my steps in the way of eternal life, and lead me to the haven of peace.

Gloria in Excelsis.

Glory to God the Father, glory to God the Son, glory to God the Holy Ghost, glory to the adorable Trinity; may God be praised, blessed, and adored for all eter-

nity. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. The Holy Ghost sanctifies and enlightens us, He gives us His love, He dwells in the souls of the just, He consoles them by the unction of His grace, and He heaps His favours upon them. Praise and glory be to Him for ever. Amen.

Collect.

O God, who dost instruct and enlighten the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Ghost, grant us, by this same Holy Ghost, that we may ever be truly wise, and ever rejoice in His consolation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (Acts ii. 1-4).

“When the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they

began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak."

Gradual.

Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created: and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of Thy love.

Prose.

Veni Sancte Spiritus,
Et emitte cœlitus
 Lucis tuæ radium,
Veni, pater pauperum,
Veni dater munerum,
 Veni, lumen cordium.

Holy Spirit! Lord of light!
From Thy clear celestial height,
 Thy pure beaming radiance
 give.

Come, Thou Father of the poor!
Come, with treasures which endure!

Come, Thou light of all that live!

Consolator optime
Dulcis hospes animæ
 Dulce refrigerium.
In labore requies,
In æstu temperies,
 In fletu solatium.

Thou, of all consolers best,
Visiting the troubled breast,
 Dost refreshing peace bestow.
Thou in toil art comfort sweet;
Pleasant coolness in the heat;
 Solace in the midst of woe.

O lux beatissima!
Reple Cordis intima,
 Tuorum fidelium.
Sine tuo numine,
Nihil est in homine,
 Nihil est innoxium.

Light immortal! Light divine!
Visit Thou these hearts of Thine,
 And our inmost being fill.
If Thou take Thy grace away,
Nothing pure in man will stay;
 All his good is turned to ill.

Lava quod est sordidum : Heal our wounds—our strength
Riga quod est aridum : renew ;
Sana quod est sancium : On our dryness pour Thy dew ;
Flecte quod est rigidum Wash the stains of guilt away.
Fove quod est frigidum : Bend the stubborn heart and
Rege quod est devium : will ;
 Melt the frozen, warm the chill ;
 Guide the steps that go astray.

Da tuis fidelibus Thou, on those who evermore
In te confitentibus Thee confess and Thee adore,
Sacrum septenarium. In Thy seven-fold gifts, descend.
Da virtutis meritum : Give them comfort when they
Da salutis exitum : die ;
Da perenne gaudium. Give them life with Thee on
 Amen. high ;
 Give them joys which never
 end. Amen.

Gospel, (John xiv. 23-26.)

"At that time, Jesus said to His disciples :
 If any one love me, he will keep my word,
 and my Father will love him, and we will
 come to him, and will make our abode with
 him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not
 my words. And the word which you have
 heard, is not mine, but the Father's who
 sent me. These things have I spoken to
 you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete,
 the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will
 send in my name, He will teach you all
 things, and bring all things to your mind,
 whatsoever I shall have said to you."

Credo.

Recite the Creed along with the priest, with lively sentiments of Faith in God and in your holy religion.

At the Offertory.

Receive, O Holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, this unspotted Host, which is offered to Thee by the hands of Thy priest, and deign to accept at the same time the offering of my whole self, which I here make to Thee. I offer Thee my mind, that Thou mayest enlighten it; I offer Thee my heart that Thou mayest inflame it; I offer myself entirely to Thee, that Thou mayest penetrate me with Thy love: I offer myself to Thee, O my God! in order to do Thy holy will, and to follow, till the last moment of my life, the sweet and powerful inspirations of Thy grace. Holy Ghost, deign to sanctify the gifts which are placed upon this altar: make them agreeable to Thy supreme majesty; purify also my heart, and let my prayer ascend to heaven with this holy oblation, like sweet-smelling incense in Thy sight. I offer Thee, O my God, in union with this sacrifice, the praises of Thy Angels and Thy Saints, the holy

zeal of just souls, the spotless purity of virgins, the faith of confessors, and the unshaken firmness of martyrs. It is through Thy help, O divine Spirit, that the elect have reached heaven: ah! deign to strengthen me also, and to make me run in the way of salvation. Enlighten me with Thy eternal light, set a watch upon my mouth and a guard at the door of my lips, that my heart may not incline to evil words. Enkindle in me the fire of Thy love, and the flame of everlasting charity. Grant that I may wash my hands among the innocent, and so draw near to Thy altar, O Lord.

Secret.

Sanctify, we beseech Thee, O Lord, these oblations, and purify our hearts by the light of the Holy Ghost. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Preface.

It is truly meet and just, right, and available to salvation, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God, through Christ our Lord. Who,

ascending above all the heavens, and sitting at Thy right hand, sent down the promised Holy Spirit upon the children of adoption. Wherefore the whole world displays its joy. The heavenly virtues also, and all the angelic powers, sing in concert an everlasting hymn to Thy glory, saying :

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

At the Canon.

O infinitely great and powerful God, who dwellest in the highest heaven, and yet deignest to look down with tenderest pity upon us Thy children ; O God, who hast commanded Thy angels to watch over us, and who enlightenest us Thyself by the gift of Thy Holy Ghost, I presume, unworthy as I am, to implore Thy succour and the abundance of Thy grace. Thou art, O God, full of mercy and clemency, my hope and my joy : grant me this day Thy choicest blessings ; refuse not to stoop to my unworthiness ; dart into my soul a ray of heavenly light, and consume by

the flames of Thy love the last stains of my sins ; kindle my heart with the fire of Thy ardent charity, and bind me to Thee for ever. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Thy words, O Lord, shall not pass away. Give me, then, O my God ! grace to know Thy law : I will meditate upon it day and night, and faithfully accomplish its holy precepts as long as I live. Descend once more upon this earth, O Jesus, Son of the living God ! come to console and fortify us by Thy presence.

At the Elevation.

Be Thou blest, O Jesus, be Thou praised and adored for ever in this Sacrament of Thy love. Most loving Jesus, cast a favourable look upon me, Thy poor child. O Thou who, during Thy mortal life, didst relieve every misery, have mercy on me. Thou camest upon the earth to save souls, suffer not mine to perish. O most merciful Saviour, Thou didst say to Thy Apostles: I will not leave you orphans, but will send you the Holy Ghost, the Comforter ; grant me this same grace, O my good Jesus ! My soul is weak, poor, and destitute ; send me the Holy Spirit, that He may comfort

and support me in this vale of tears. May Thy Holy Spirit visit me, and make me partake of that pure joy which is reserved for faithful souls. Grant that after having received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, I may never be ashamed of Thee before men, but may accomplish with courage and with a holy freedom, all the sacred precepts of religion, that Thou mayest, at the last day, own me for Thy faithful soldier and servant ; Thou who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

At the Pater.

Recite the Lord's prayer slowly, and with devotion, to obtain the grace of the Holy Ghost. Add to it an act of hope.

At the Agnus Dei.

If you are to communicate, say the Acts before Communion, p. 95. If you do not communicate, say the following prayers:

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, give us peace.

Strengthen, O my God ! in the depths of my soul, my attachment to Thy holy religion ; confirm my faith, establish my hope, increase my love for Thee. Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered. May the name of the Lord be blessed now and for evermore. The Lord is my portion in time and for eternity.

At the Domine non sum Dignus.

Make a spiritual Communion ; ardently desire to receive your Lord, and say ;

O my Jesus ! why have I offended Thee ? Why do my sins hinder me from receiving Thee ? I believe that Thou art present in this most holy Sacrament. I love Thee above all things, and I long to possess Thee within my soul. As I cannot now receive Thee sacramentally, come at least in spirit into my heart. I unite myself to Thee, as already there ; never let me be separated from Thee. Amen.

Communion.

Suddenly there came a noise from heaven, as of a strong rushing wind, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

Post Communion.

May the pouring forth of the Holy Ghost into our hearts cleanse them, O Lord, and render them fruitful by the inward dew of His grace. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Priest's Blessing.

May Almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless you. Amen.

At the Last Gospel.

“And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” (Matth. xxviii. 18-20.)

After Mass.

Think seriously, my dear child, on the great dignity of Him who is about to come into your heart. You are going to receive the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the adorable

Trinity, the eternal God. Humble yourself profoundly in His presence, and ask for grace to profit by this great Sacrament. Be very attentive to all the ceremonies. Do not amuse yourself by looking about you, but before your turn comes to be anointed, employ yourself in begging God's grace, that you may become a true soldier of Jesus Christ; and after you have returned to your place, thank Him for the blessing you have just received.

THE CEREMONIES OF CONFIRMATION.

The Bishop begins by intoning the Veni Creator (p. 130.) in which you must join, not with the voice only, but with the heart. When the hymn is finished, the Bishop stretches out his hands over those who are to be confirmed, begging the Holy Ghost to enrich them with His gifts. During this ceremony, which forms an essential part of the Sacrament, all ought to kneel, and beg the Holy Spirit to come into their hearts. The Bishop then anoints them with the holy chrism, making the sign of the Cross upon their foreheads; after which he gives them a slight blow on the cheek, saying; "Peace be with you," thus making them soldiers of Jesus Christ, and teaching them that they ought to be ready to suffer persecution for His name. The ceremony ends by the

Bishop's blessing, which, though not necessary to the Sacrament, you ought to receive kneeling, and with the greatest respect and devotion. The newly confirmed then recite the Pater, Ave, and Credo, to which you may add the prayers after Confirmation, p. 147.

ACTS BEFORE CONFIRMATION.

Act of Faith.

O Holy Ghost, I firmly believe that Thou art true God, proceeding from the Father and the Son, and that Thou art about to come into my soul by this sacrament of Confirmation, in order to sanctify me, and make me a perfect Christian.

Act of Hope.

I hope of Thy infinite goodness, O Holy Spirit, that in receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, I shall obtain the abundance of Thy grace; that Thou wilt make me a true soldier of Christ, and wilt give me strength to confess the faith even at the peril of my life.

Act of Charity.

I love Thee, O Holy Ghost, with all my heart, with all my soul, and above all things, because Thou art infinitely good, and worthy of all love; inflame my heart with Thy love, and grant that after having received Thee in the Sacrament of Confirmation, I may be faithful in the performance of my duty till the end of my life. Amen.

The Prayer to obtain the gifts of the Holy Ghost, p. 132.

ACTS AFTER CONFIRMATION.

An Act of Gratitude.

O Holy Spirit, though I, a poor child, am unable to understand the greatness of the benefit Thou hast just granted me by giving Thyself to me with the abundance of Thy graces, I nevertheless thank Thee with the deepest gratitude; accept, I beseech Thee, the humble thanks which I presume to offer to Thy divine Majesty, and give me grace ever to be grateful to Thee.

An Act of Consecration.

O God the Holy Ghost ! out of Thy pure goodness Thou hast given Thyself to me ; help me in return to consecrate myself entirely to Thee, with the purest love of which my heart is capable. O divine Spirit, I love Thee, and I prefer Thy gifts and Thy heavenly graces, to all the riches the world can offer me. I wish in all things to be guided by Thy holy inspirations, and sustained by Thy grace. In order to obtain so great a blessing, and to thank Thee for the favours Thou hast already bestowed upon me, I give myself entirely to Thee. Should I not be ungrateful and blind, if I did not consecrate to Thee all my heart, all my mind, in a word, all myself?

Receive me, Spirit of mercy, deign to preserve in me the good desires with which Thy grace has inspired me, and the resolution I now form of being entirely Thine all the days of my life. Amen.

Holy Virgin Mary, my Angel Guardian, and all ye saints of God, pray to our Lord for me.

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RICHARDSON AND SON, PRINTERS, DERBY.

